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CHAPTER XII

THE LOW COUNTRIES,

Common factors.

The cases of Holland and Belgium have a Good deal in common, Access to both countriesextremely difficult, in spite of their nearness to British shores.The short sea crossing was attractive, but in fact the coasts were from the first too strongly held for it to be of any value: various attempts were made to organise sea operations, but none of them were successful. Air operations were not much easier. Both countries are thickly populated, except for the Ardennes in the south of Belgium, which are inconveniently remote from the main centres of population and industry so that landing operations were almost impossible and it was difficult even to find suitable dropping zones. What was worse, the direct bomber route to theRuhr lay across this territory, and the Germans gave it very high priority for all kinds of air defence – guns, search lights, night-fighters, radar equipment,it was exceptionally unhealthy for a heavily laden aircraft to pause there and circle at a low level to find the faint lights of a reception committee, and the R.A.F. justifiably disliked it.

The military importance of the Low Countries also meant that they were well guarded by the German Security Services, both Sicherheitsdienst (civil) and Abwehr (military). These Were on the worst of terms with one another, and they were not otherwise conspicuously inefficient, and their pressure on nascent resistance movements was intense. Their power was increased by mistakes in S.O.E., due partly to inexperience, partly to the external difficulties: and both in Holland and in Belgium there were setbacks of a

disastrous kind, which shook S.O.E.'s credit badly and delayed the development of effective resistance. It is not clear that the quality of the S.O.E. Dutch and Belgium sections was lower than that of the other 'Country Sections'; but it was very late in the day before they settled down as working organisations.

Politically, there are again parallels between the two countries: but there were also big differences and it will be best to treat them separately.

1. BELGIUM.

Political Difficulties.

Politically the Belgian Government was one of the weakest of the Allied governments in exile. The Cabinet in office in May 1940 had left Belgium soil when it was overrun by the Germans: the King had stayed, and had surrendered on 28th May with his Army. In France, the Cabinet split: part accepted the view that the more patriotic role was to stay with their own people, the rump reached England on October 1940, under the leadership of M. Pierlot, and was accepted there as the legitimate government of Belgium. But it was weak in personalities, in manpower, in all other resources (except control of the Belgian Congo;)(1) and it lacked confidence in its own position. Out of this situation grew intrigues and suspicions, accusations and counteraccusations, and the files are full of bickerings between S.O.E. and the Belgian government which cannot be examined in detail here. (2)

(1) The exiled government was in a very sound financial position, and paid all expenses incurred on Belgian Resistance except the pay of agents who belonged to British forces and the 'overhead' costs of S.O.E. for arms, aircraft, training, etc.

(2) S.O.E. Archives File 4/100/2, and D/R Belgian Files contain most of the important papers: there is a useful
History of the Belgian Section by Major Amies.
In Belgium the collection of material for the History of Resistance is in the hands of a Historical Commission, (Sec. Major Lejeune), address Ministère de la Defense Nationale, Office de la Resistance, Historique de la Resistance Belge, 2, Avenue Palmerston, Brussels.

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As with most European countries, one basic difficulty was the duality of civil and military authorities within the Government. The ‘2ème Section' under the Belgian Ministry of Defence in London was staffed by officers of the Belgian Army, and was concerned with matters affecting the renascence of the Belgian Army in Belgium. Over against it was the Süreté de l’État Under a certain M. Lepage who had direct access to M. Piertlot, and was Concerned with all secret political matters. certai

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The Süreté’s case against the Army was that the latter was Right-wing in its sympathies and above all loyal to the King: it was not. interested. in sabotage or in any action against the Germans except in order to increase its own strength: and it would use its strength, when the Germans withdrew, to re-establish the King with a 'crypto-Fascist' regime. The Army's case was that M. Pierlot stood for nobody but himself, and that Lepage was using his position without scruple to hamper and destroy any movement within Belgium which could interfere with the political future of the Government in exile. Unfortunately these accusations had some foundation on both sides.

After an early indeterminate phase, S.O.E.’s first instinct was to collaborate with Lepage, who had the upper hand within the Belgian government:. as elsewhere, it was difficult to operate without the support of the recognised Government in the recruitment of agents, the assessment of politioal feeling, the preparation of attacks on industry, and in countless other ways. This policy was associated with Mr. Dadson, who was head of the Belgian Section from December 1940 until about the end of November 1941, when he was replaced by Major C.T. Knight. It involved the sharing

of agents, the planning of missions in common, the pooling of information: S.O.E. kept control of W/T communications, and reserved the right to have its own agents, but it was willing to consider (if need be) control of operations through a joint committee, on the lines which proved successful in Norway. (1)

By the end of 1941 this policy had broken down. Evidence was accumulating that Lepage at least (and probably his masters) were concerned primarily to hamper S.O.E's policy, both in promoting continuous sabotage and in building up a Secret Army: the former meant (perhaps) provoking reprisals and therefore hostility in Belgium to the exiled government, the latter meant arming the opponents of the government. This total absence of common ground expressed itself in many small ways: difficulty in recruiting; agents, secret issue of orders contradicting those of S.O.E., obstruction of the escape from Belgium of men required by S.O.E., and so on. The atmosphere within Belgian circles in Britain was full of suspicion, gossip and intrigue; and no frank relations were possible between S.O.E. and their official contacts.

The year 1942 is full of S.O.E's attempts to escape from this vicious circle. Discussions began in February with a meeting between M. Pierlot and M. Gutt (his Minister of Defence) on one side and Brig. Gubbins and Major Keswick on the other; a friendly enough meeting, but leading only to an exchange of letters in which M. Pierlot nade it absolutely plain that control must rest with M. Lepage. This was accepted but not agreed by S.O.E., an ambiguity which was a source of trouble later.

(1) Difficulties of working with the Belgian Government can be seen from S.O.E. Archives Files (DR/Plans) 'Belgium 3 Vols. 1 & 2' .

By June the matter had reached a 'higher level', Mr. Eden saw M. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, on 4th June, and did his best to pin him down as regards co-operation with S.O.E. A few days later M. Pierlot lunched alone with Brig. Gubbins, and the ground was gone over once again. Brig. Gubbins' band was strengthened by the letter on the functions of S.O.E. which General Brook had sent on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff to all Allied Governments a few days before. (1) but, even so, no agreement of any kind was reached. Lord Selborne was equally unsuccessful at a meeting with M. Spaak early in July.

A little progress was made on 27th July, when Brig. Gubbins saw M. Spaak while M. Pierlot was absent in the Congo, and Le Page's hand seemed to lie a little lighter. But the agreement was withdrawn as soon as offered. An acid exchange of letters led on 14th August to an essay by M. Spaak in the manner of De Gaulle: 'relations were broken of," on the very 'Gaullish' pretext that S.O.E. had hampered the Belgian Goverment in its dealings with an emissary of a military organisation, the Legion Belge, who was then in England. S.O.E. laid the matter before Mr. Eden and the Chiefs of Staff, and there for the moment it rested.

Relations recovered slowly from this low point. A certain M. Delfosse, a former Minister of Justice, recently arrived from Belgium, was appointed to the Goverment as Minister of Information and Justice toward the end of September, and was given control both of the Süreté and of the 2ème Section, apparently with a view to finding a compromise. But he was slow to make advances, and on 29th October 1942 Sir Charles Hambro laid the matter before the

(1) See below p. 549.

Chiefs of Staff, on the basis that S.O.E. were prevented by the action of the Belgian Government from fulfilling their directive, and must make a new departure by independent action in Belgium; he suggested that the Chiefs of staff should themselves bring pressure to bear on these lines. The Chiefs of Staff evaded direct action, but apparently the hint of it brought a slight concession: Lord Selborne saw M. Delfosse shortly afterwards, and with great reluctance agreed that the Süreté should continue (under the Minister) to be the responsible Belgian authority, provided that all matters of 'action' were delegated by it to the 2ème Section, and kept rigidly apart from its other activities. (2) This arrangement rested only on Belgian assurances, and could clearly be no more than a temporary respite.

Operations. This political background coloured all activity in the field during the same period. The quality of agents available was low, their training was imperfect and their morale was bad: only a few of those first sent reached a tolerable standard of patriotism and resolution. Nor were they well served by their backers in London, whether British or Belgian.

An outline plan had been produced in May 1941 for the establishment in each of the nine provinces of Belgium of an S.O.E. organiser with his own wireless operator, in order to build up an 'underground' from local recruits; this was in accord with the usual S.O.E. conceptions at this stage, but had very little relation to what happened

(1) C.O.S.(42)386(0) of 7th November- taken C.O.S.(42) 312th Mtg. Item, 7 of 9th November.
(2) Reported to the Chiefs of Staff in C.0.S.(42)422(0) of 30th November: taken C.O.S.(42)341st Mtg. Item 6 of 6th December.

in practice. The first operation took place on 12th May, 1941, and consisted of one team of organiser and W/T operator, and a single agent sent in collaboration with P.W.E. (then S.O.1.) with a political mission to the Liberal and socialist Parties. This Man remained at large for over a year, and eventually returned to England: but the organising team achieved nothing, and at least one of them was arrested early. Rather more progress was made in the third quarter of 1941, when three teams and two independent organigers were put in; the teams do not seem to have been of very high quality, but one of the organisers, the Abbé Jourdain, did good work and eventually returned safely. Wireless communication was opened for the first time, and dividends began to appear in the shape of sabotage reports and news of independent local organisations. As usual, the evidence of sabotage cannot be very strictly Assessed, but it is clear that possibilities of action did exist. Two more teams went in towards the end of the year, and the first tivo supply-dropping operations took place. A Lysander operation was tried in December to bring out two agents, but a German patrol airived on the ground as the aircraft landed, and the pilot vas only able to escape by taking off again instantly in a hail of bullets: an incident which did not encourage the R.A.F. in its dealings with Belgium. (1)

So far, to the end of 1941, developments .were relatively favourable: at least no worse than in other theatres. Sixteen agents had gone in, five wireless sets were on the air, and only one arrest had been reported.

(1) There were no more Lysander operations to Belgium: one Lysander operation to France was arranged for an agent of the Belgian Section.

There was encouraging news of sabotage and local resistance. At this point German counter-action took effect, and there was a wave of arrests early in 1942; what was worse , two wireless sets were captured and operated by the Germans. The deception was effective for at least six months, with disastrous results in almost the whole fabric of the organisation. The following figures give a clear picture of what happened:-

1942	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Agents sent (total)	13	9	6	8
Of these, dropped to German reception	-	4	5	-
Agents arrested (total)	9	9	13	1
Store-dropping Ops.(total)	-	9	7	1
Of these, dropped to German reception	-	6	7	1
W/T sets in operation during period	9	6	8	8
Of these, operated by Germans	2	5	8	7

It will be seen how the arrests early in the year, of which S.O.E. at the time knew nothing, permitted a complete penetration of the organisation, until in the third quarter what the S.O.E. Belgian Section conceived to be its organisation in the field was no more than a mirage created by the Gestapo. At that stage suspicion was aroused in London, and the fourth quarter represents a new departure, in which the joke is to some extent turned against the Germans. The old contacts are avoided, and agents are kept clear of the contaminated organisation; a genuine wireless channel is again established outside the German net.

Penetration of this kind is an ever-present danger in underground operations, and perhaps the worst that can be said Of S.O.E's Belgian Section (and the Dutch Section also) is that in their inexperience thoy ignored it until taught by disaster. There wore many contributory causes. Agents were ill-trained and too readily disposed to take risks and make unnecessary contacts and confidences. The codes used were at this stage relatively simple, and were easily brolken and adopted by the Cormans. S.O.E's wireless communications were run by S.I.S. till the early summer of 1942, and it was not possible for S.O.E. themselves to maintain an elaborate check on the form of messages as a clue to the identity of the senders. Belgium was a difficult country for air operations, and there was a temptation to build up too much on a limited number of contacts: yet even a blind drop is safer than one to a 'reception' committee arranged by the Gestapo. It is easy to see - after the event - how the trouble arose and how safeguards could have been taken: it was not so easy to apply them at the time.

The 'Native' Organisations.

In spite of the almost complete 'black-out' in the summer of 1942, there were one or two important developments which give a thread of continuity. The most important of these was the gCrowth of contacts with the 'Secret Army'. The first landmark here was the arrival in England in March 1942 of two officers, Cdt. Grisar and Cdt. Bernard, who had been associated with the Secret Army in Belgium: these two were given posts in the 2ème Section of the Ministry of Defence, from which they maintained a somewhat reckless campaign againat M. Lepage, in pretty close liaison with S.O.E. Then, in July 1942, one of S.O.E's few really good agents, P. de Liedekerke, brought back Cdt. Glazer, the

head of one of the para~military organisations, the 'Legion Belge': de Liedekerke had been sent early in 1942 to contact an orgarisation known as the 'Chemises Khaki' believed to consist of Royalist officers: he had found that it was politically unreliable, and had turned to other possibilities. Cdt. Glazer represented a real patriotic and anti-German movement, though its scope and affiliations were not easy to sort out: but unfortunately he seems himself to have been reckless, obstiate and indiscreet - a dangerous man as an underground leader.Still worse, he appeared in England to represent an S.O.E. and 2ème Section intrigue against the Süreté;and when he returned to the field in August it was without any proper directive from the recognised Belgian authorities. In his absence from .Belgium (it appears) the 'Secret Army' had been re-organised from within so as to leave him on one side: and he did not resume a central position, though he seems to have been leader of a rival faction until his arrest in the summer of 1943. One or two other missions went cut in the summer of1942, under the joint auspices of the 2ème Section and S.O.E., but they were without exception failures, either through previous Gestapo penetration, or through disasters of their own.There was at the time much suspicion that M. Lepage had in some way counter-worked them, but no confirmation whatever was found for this after the Armistice, and the story can safely be dismissed.

P.W.E. Missions in the field.

The other point of interest is the part played by P.W.E. missions, which were of particular importance in this phase of bad relations between S.O.E. and the Süreté. A very narrow line divides a secret mission directed to

investigate and support underground propaganda from one sent to further active resistance: but the former could be organised through P.W.E., and P.W.E's relations with the propaganda section of the Süreté were relatively good. From the first mission in 1941 P.W.E. in this field had a good deal to do with the development of political contacts, and in 1942 there were some ten missions jointly organised by P.W.E. and the Süreté on this basis, and sent to the field through S.O.E's organisation. On the whole, they were kept pretty clear both of the disasters of S.O.E's own 'circuits' and of the political wrangles which. involved the Secret Army; their work provided a very valuable link between this first unhappy stage and the more prosperous and active resistance of 1943 and 1944.

2. H0LLAN D (1)

Political Difficulties.

The Dutch Government, even after the Japanese attack on the East Indies, was much stronger politically than the Belgian. The queen and the Royal Family were in England: the Cabinet had travelled with them as a body; (2) and there was no ambiguity about Holland's position in the war - it was clear that there had been no surrender, only a local armistice in face of overwhelming force.Yet in spite of theseadvantages S.O.E. found difficulties in dealing with the Dutch Government which were curiously similar to those with M. Pierlot and M. Lepage. Dr. Gerbrandy, the Prime Minister, took comparatively little part: but there existed a Dutch Secret Service under a civilian, M. Van 't Sant, who had great perscnal influence in Court circles, and who was believed to favour a policy of 'ca'canny' as regards active resistance, though he was keen enough on intelligence and particularly on political intelligence. Over against him stood the Military Intelligence Service (M.I.D.) under an officer of the Dutch Marines, Colonel de Bruyne, who was from the first warmly interested in plans for the formation of a Secret Army and eager to co-operate with S.O.E.: but there were the usual doubts as to the role of this Secret Army - was it to attack the Germans at a moment chosen by

(1) There is a useful history of the Dutch Section by Col. Dobson and Capt. Mills. Some of the political papers are on S.O.E. Archives Files 5/100/2 and 5/470/1, also D/R files on 'Holland'; but these are far from complete. In Holland material for the history of the Resistance is being collected by the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Acting Director Dr. L. de Jong) Amsterdam, Herengracht 479; much information is published monthly in t'e Institute's periodical 'Nederland in Oorlogstijd'.

(2) The original Prime Minister (De Geer) lost heart and deserted in the summer of 1940: he was succeeded by the more resolute Gerbrandy.

The Allies, or to emerge only when the Allies had liberated Holland, and then to act in the interest of ‘public order’ and the suppression of action by the Left?
The intrigues which resulted from this situation led into some curious corners of Dutch politics, bat there is no need to follow them in detail. S.O.E. threw such weight as it had on the military side of the battle, quite without success until at last the obvious imminence of invasion forced a change. But though S.O.E. was regarded with little favour by M. Van’t Sant, matters were a little better than with Belgium, the Dutch military possessed more resources than the Belgians, they were better able to supply men and advice, and the 'general tone of proceedings was much less scrimonious.

Operations.
S.O.E's original plans, which were discussed with the Dutch were in April 1942 formally embodied in ‘Plan for Holland’, were on the usual lines. (1) The country was to be divided into districts, each of which would be supplied with at least one organiser, instructor, and wireless Operator from England: these agents would work in collaboration with the earliest of the native organisations, the 'Orde Dienst', and would arrange for it to be supplied from England and for its action to be co-ordinated with the Allied plans. Open sabotage was for the nresent to be discouraged, as likely to expose the population to reprisals; but plans were to be laid for attacks on industrial targets, and the Resistance were to do what damage they could by 'insaississable’ methods.

(1) See 'Outline of Planning for 1942’ - in Dutch Section History under 1942.

The plan was straightforward enough, its execution was a débacle which had serious effects both on Dutch resistance and on S.O.E's standing as a department. As in the Belgian case, the story is best summarised in figures, which necessarily take us somewhat beyond the first phase of S.O.E's work.

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	Agents Dispatched	'Received' by Germans	Survived	Missing or died	Executed
Sept.	2	-	1	1	-
Oct.	Nil				
Nov.	2	-	1	-	1
Dec.	Hil				
1942					
Jan.	Nil				
Feb.	1	-	1	-	-
Mar.	5	1	-	2	3
Apr.	3	2	-	-	3
May	2	2	-	-	2
June	4			1	3
July	1	1	-	-	1
Aug.	Nil				
Sept.	4	4	-	1	3
Oct.	11	11	-	4	7
NOV.	2	2	1	-	1
Dec.	Nil				
1943					
Jan.	Nil				
Feb.	8	8	-	2	6
Mar.	3	3	1	-	2
Apr.	2	2	-	1	1
May	3	3	-	-	3
June-Aug.	Nil				
Sept.	1	-	1	-	-
Oct.	2	-	2	-	-

(11o further operations till 31st March 1944)

Totals	56;	43	8	12	36 (1)

(1) Most of these men were held until September 1944, then executed together at Mauthausen Concentration Camp.

During the same period 544 containers of stores were dropped, all into German hands they contained inter alia:-

High Explosive	12,863 lbs.
Stan Guns	744
Pistols	2,306
Clams & Limpets (explosive devices)	823

Over 350,000 Dutch florins were issued to agents up to the end of 1943. Eleven R.A.F. aircraft were lost on operations. This picture is an appalling one. For a period of about fifteen months the Dutch Section had patiently planned the creation of resistance in Holland. It had recruited agents, had trained them elaborately and briefed them for special missions within a general plan: a stream of wireless traffic had passed between Fngland and Holland: aircraft had been sent on difficult operations, in a heavily defended area, and had delivered men and stores to their destinations in face of heavy casualties. S.O.E. had a full and detailed picture of the organisation thus created, and reported confidently on its potentialities. The reality behind it consisted only of two able German officers of the Abwehr Oberstleutnant Giskes and Sonderfuehrer Huntemann, and some forty agents in concentration camps.

There have naturally been elaborate inquests into the consequence of events, and lessons have been learnt, marked and digested.(1) It is not necessary to do more here than indicate briefly what happened.

(1) The J.I.C. reported on the affair (so far as then known) in J.I.C (43)517(0) of 22nd December, and the facts are very carefully recorded in the Dutch Section History and in S.O.E. Archives File 62/470/1.2. There is also an interesting record of the interrogations of Giskes and Huntemann after the Armistice - (at present held by Mr. N. Mott, M.O.1(S.P.).

The first mission was not sent until September 1941, but was relatively successful: nothing very definite was achieved but the two men kept out of German hands, and one of them got back to England by boat in February 1942 with useful general information. The other seems to have been lost at sea. The next mission, in November, 1941, was the first to carry a wireless set, and it succeeded in establishing satisfactory communication with the United Kingdom and in contacting native resistance. Unfortunately the Germans were already well served by stool-pigeons in the Dutch organisations, and they came to hear of a supply dropping operation, which had been arranged for 27th February 1942. They secured the stores which were then drooped; this also gave them conclusive proof that some wireless transmitter was in touch with England. The wireless location services went into action at once, and the operator was caught in The Hague on 7th March. He was speedily persuaded to transmit messages under German control, and the first signal which passed in this way was sent on 18th March, 1942. To bc fair to the agent, he endeavoured to draw S.O.E's attention to the trick by omitting the agreed 'secret identity check'; but this was ignored in London, as being merely an instance of the carelessness natural in agents.

Before this turning-point there had been one or two other missions which began work independently of German control. In February, 1942, one man was sent to get in touch with the underground press and with the Trade Union movement:. contacts were made successfully, but he had no wireless operator and no source of money or supplics, so that there was not much scope for development. He eventually lost heart and managed to escape via Switzerland,

reaching England again in September 1942. Two other missions in March, 1942, and one in April, were at first uncontrolled: but their contacts soon led them to 'contaminated' organisations, and by early May all these had been gathered in. All later operations were part of a single chain leading back to the initial error; the first drop to a reception committee controlled by the Germans was made on 27th March 1942, and forty-two other agents went the same way up to May 1943. The system was in theory one of unconnected 'cells': in fact (unknown to London) all these cells derived from a single focal point, which had been occupied by the Germans almost at the outset.

The mystification might have broken down at several points. One agent had an intelligence role, which the Germans felt it was beyond them to counterfeit and he had to be fictitiously 'killed in landing'. There was always the chance that one of the captured men might get away or that rumours of what was happening would leak out and reach England through the S.I.S. or some other channel. The bluff itself worked perfectly - after all (in the nature of things) the Germans knew far more about Dutch resistance than did S.O.E., and they were technically more skilled; but they were lucky to be able to maintain it for so long without accidents. Suspicion did not arise until a report was received in June 1943 that eight parachutists had been arrested 'some time ago'. This led to a thorough overhaul by the two British organisations acting together. Wireless contact was maintained through the old channels, but operations were stopped and all messages were thoroughly scrutinised.

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In September, 1943, began the attempt to build up again. One man was dropped in Paris, in order to make his own way to Holland, and to check a contact given by one of the controlled sets: he visited the man in question, found his surroundings very suspicious, and managed to get back to England himself in November. Two others were to be dropped in October, 1943, in Belgium: the aircraft was shot down by a night-fighter but the men escaped and found their way to Brussels. There they made 'resistance' contacts which led only to the German Security Police. One of them was arrested, the other was used as a sop to quiet the suspicions which the Germans could already feel rising in London; he was escorted and assisted, all unwitting, by a German 'stool-pigeon', and eventually got back to England in December.

At this point the gaff was finally blown by the arrival in Switzerland of two of S.O.E's men who had escaped in August, 1943, from Haaren concentration camp, where they had been imprisoned since their arrival and very thoroughly interrogated. the interrogation had made it perfectly plain to them that the whole organisation was under German control, and this was the news which reached S.O.E. in unmistakeable form from Switzerland in mid-November 1943.

This total collapse could not be kept dark within the inner circle of government in London, and it had a very bad effect on S.O.E's reputation at a crucial period of its history .(1) The immediate effect was a ban on all air operations to Holland, which was not raised until the end of March, 1944. Wireless traffic was maintained, but in a very non-committal form. The position must thus have become pretty plain to Giskes and

(1) See below p. 629.

Huntemann, and they had definite confirmation from some S.I.S. agents who were caught early in 1944. They ‘signed off' in a message dated (appropriately enough) 1st April, 1944:-

> ‘Messrs. Blunt, Bingham and Successors, Ltd. London. In the last time you are trying to make business in the Netherlands without our assistance. 'We think this rather unfair in view of our long and successful co-operation as your sole agents. But never mind, whenever you will come to pay a visit to the Continent you may be assured that you will be received with the same care and result as all those you sent us before. So long.'

The ‘Native’ Resistance.

The best that can be said for this affair is that it did not seriously involve the indigenous resistance movements.The Germans had caught S.O.E’s organisation at so early a stage that there were few threads leading to any real centre of resistance; the Germans could not learn much from S.O.E. that they did not already know. Their chief gain was that until very shortly before D-day they completely thwarted any attempt to build Dutch resistance into the Allied plans and to equip it in readiness for action.The resistance existed and was stubbornly active though ill-organised and riddled by German agents.The illegal papers, of which the most important were 'Het Parool’ , ‘Je Maintiendrai’ , and ‘Trouw’ maintained a continuous existence; and were well written and actively circulated. The ‘0rde Dienst', to which referencehas been made earlier, also kept its continuity as a loose organisation related to all the old political parties of the Centre.As its name implies, it saw its role primarily that of lamateur police' to maintain order in the wake of the departing Germans, and it had an anti Communist flavour about it which lent itself a little to

German exploitation: but it represented the real national feeling of the respectable Dutch. Independently, there existed an active organisation 'Centrun van Sabotage VI' (C.X.VI), which was built more on the 'cellular' lines of a revolutionary organisation, and did not disclaim contact with Communism:. its purpose was violent and practical action the elimination of traitors, the provision of forged papers, the destruction of German labour service records, and so forth - and its record for courage and security was good. But at this stage it was lamed by lack of contact with the outer world, and the development of a Secret Army was equally, retarded. The central Raad van Verzet (R.V.V., Council o Resistance), which was to link these rudimentary organisations together, apparently did not emerge until the summer of 1943, after the failure of an ill co-ordinated General Strike in May of that year.

Within the limitations imposed by the Dutch terrain, there was plenty of material here for effective action, and it proved possible in 1944 to recover a substantial amount of the lost ground.

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CHAPTER XV

INTERNAL ORGANISATION AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The General Situation

The late summer of 1942 has been chosen as a point at which to break: these narratives an consider the general development of S.O.E. because it was a turning-point in the war, and a turning point also in the character,of the organisation. One cannot pin the change of direction to any precise date, nor was it clearly appreciated at the time. But in general terms it can be felt that (in spite of many defeats in Whitehall warfare) S.O.E. rested up to this point on the original conception of a grand strategy of subversion, which would employ all means to break down German morale and to raise their slaves against them in Europe, and which would be as indispensable as any other weapon in enabling the British to defeat a military power which was on paper superior in all the elements of military strength. With the full mobilisation of America and the unexpected military resurgence of Russia, it was no longer necessary to depend strategically on the 'Fourth Arm'. The Allies were entitled to expect victory by superior military strength, and their strategy could again become a matter purely for the three 'old-fashioned' services. Sabotage, guerilla warfare, secret armies could still contribute to the execution of a plan but they were henceforward quite secondary in the making of it. The soldiers had the upper hand of the politicians; and Special Operations tend progressively to share the decline of politics and to become a weapon in the hands of a C.-in-C. , more complex than Signals or Artillery, but equally controlled by the local requirements of the battle.

It is in this role that S.O.E. (or rather the various S.O. branches under various Ca-in-C.) made its most- visible and incontrovertible contribution to the winning of the war: it is also this later period that raises doubts as to whether the military gains were worth the political consequences involved. Ironically (but logically) it was not till the Allies could show the occupied countries that force was on their side that doubters flocked to the Resistance and it became everywhere a mass movement. And at this stage S.O.E. (and the Foreign Office Which in theory controlled it in such matters) could not pause to reckon political consequences: the battle was joined, the fate of armies was at stake, and all political forces, from Cagoulard-to Communist, must be turned somehov, momentarily, in the same direction, that of military victory.

Thus subversion only began to show serious military results when the balance of military power was already shifting. But this is scarcely sufficient to show that the original, more political, conception had failed. It cannot of course be claimed that anywhere in Europe in the summer of 1942 there existed an organised fighting force taking its directives from Britain. No such force could have been organised in the time and with the means available. But in every country S.O.E. had done something: it had shown that Britain's contribution to the Resistance did not consist solely of inspiring words from the B.B.C. or from one of P.W.E.'s Freedom Stations. Friends had taken desperate chances to come in person; wireless links had been established: appeals for material help had been answered. All had been done inadequately end sometimes

disastrously but it had.been done.It had been proved that Resistance movements, could exist, could be fed, could be directed; that the will to resist was there and that the limiting factors were mainly material - more aircraft, better wireless sets, better disguise, more training in the art of conspiracy,

Apart from this moral gain, which can be felt but not measured, there was little to show for the work done.: The periodical reports made to the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff are deplorably thin in demonstrable military achievement. There was plenty to say about the movements of opinion in Europe, the plans of the Resistance, and the hypothetical number of its adherents. There were also plenty of reports of sabotage directed against the Germans;but the evidence behind them was alvays tenuous- it was rarely possible to say who had blown up what, and where he had done it. At best, it can be said that the volume of smoke implied a pretty substantial fire.But it was only outside the area of German control that results could be seen and assessed; there they were handsome, but not miraculous.

1. THE ORGANISATION OF S.O.E.

Numbers

In this development S.O.E. had grown piecemeal to a very substantial size.

By July 1942 the total of its staff at home and overseas (apart from agents) is given as 3,226.(1) This can be broken down roughly as follows:-

(1) Playfair Report, Annex II.

United Kingdom: Headquarters:	Officers	247
	Junior 33taff	444
		691
	Research, Supply and Training	1,462
	Total	2,153
Middle East (excluding 444 Army personnel attached)		608
North and South America		100
Far East and India		203
Other Missions		162
Total		3,226

These figures doubtless contain errors in detail, but the general pattern is clear enough.

H.Q. Premises.

There had been no very drastic changes in the organisation at Headquarters, (I) but every individual branch and section had expanded: the department had outgrown No. 64 Baker Street and occupied a series of buildings in the same area – Michael House, Norgeby House, Berkeley Court and others. It also had various other scattered premises in London, retained as 'flats' where agents could be housed or interviewed without endangering the security of the main organisation. Such for instance were the Norwegian Section flat at Chiltern Court, and that of R/F Section in Dorset Square.

Training and Signals

The rest of the organisation in Great Britain had been correspondingly anlarged. The system of training schools had already reached almost its final form, and is dealt with in some detail later. (2) It was only in June 1942 that S.O.E. became independent 0f S.I.S. in the organisation of its signals systems, (3) and almost the whole of this large

(1) An Organisation Chart for July 1942 is at Appendix E.
(2) Below p. 1125.
(3) See p. 590.

development lies outside this period. (1) But the nucleus of the system was already in being at Grendon, near Bicester, where a signals school had been begun as early as October 1941.

Research and Production

Research and production units on a small scale had been inherited both from D. Section and fromM.I.(R), and in June 1941 Prof. Newitt of the Imperial College was appointed as Director of Scientific Research. The development and production of explosive devices and weapons suitable for clandestine warfare proceeded mainly at Station IX (The Fryth, Welwyn) and Station XII (Aston House, near Stevenage) respectively: (2)but there was a curious offshoot in naval development at Staines Reservoir. The miniature submarine had obvious possibilities for operations against shipping in narrow waters; and the Welman and Welfreighter, two types of miniature submarine conceived primarily for special operations at fairly long range in the Far East.

For other types of research S.O.E. was largely dependent on the experts of other Ministries; but the field to be covered was enormous, and it required special knowledge on almost every scientific subject, from poisons and bacteriological warfare to radio devices and the chemistry of forgery. In particular, disguise in all its aspects was almost a science in itself. A 'Camouflage' workshop was opened in South Kensington Museum of Natural History in January 1942, under the charge of an expert in cinema settings, costumes and so forth: (3) and it became a remarkable manufacturory of disguised explosives and arms, 'continental' clothing, cigarettes, toothpaste and an immense variety of the miscellaneous accessories needed to maintain a disguise in Occupied Europe.

(1) Below p. 1136.
(2) Part II of the S.O.E. Technical Histories refer to the work of these Stations.
(3) An illustrated History of the Camouflage Section is available with the Technical Histories.

The ‘Forgery’ section, (1) which was a necessary complement to this, was first formed in March 1941 with a Polish staff of three at the original Polish 'school' (S.T.S.38) at Briggens. The Poles were technically skilful, but possessed few of the resources required in Intelligence and material, and the unit soon expanded with British staff and equipment, working first for S.O.E.‘s Polish Section and gradually enlarged to undertake work for other countries. The unit eventually took over all the accomodation at Briggens (as S.T.S.14), and at the peak period had a staff of 50: much work was put out to various firms of private printers. P.W.E. co-operated closely with this Section as regards the production of 'black' propaganda material purporting to be of German origin. (2)

Less specialized supplies presented an easier problem, as S.O.E. could draw on any of the Services for Service stores in ordinary use: a small ordnance depot was opened near Camberley in February 1941, and expanded considerably in course of time. But the main art here was that of maintaining good liaison with ‘Q' branches, particularly in the War Office: S.O.E. required only relatively small quantities and could count on pretty high priority so lang as personal relations were good. The most specialised task on the supply side was that of packing stores to be parachuted to the field. At first each operation was an event of note, and the work might even be done personally by the officers of the Country Section

(1) See the brief 'history' of Station 14, by Maj. Ince.
(2) Garnett's History of P.W.E. , p. 171.

concerned. but by October 1941 it became necessary to open a special packing station at Saffron Walden, and in April 1942 it was moved to Station 61 - Gaynes House, St. Neots. There in due course packing became a small industry in itself; for the heavy operations of 1943 and 1944, the contents of containers were standardised in various forms, which could be combined in different patterns to make an aircraft load: it remained necessary of course to mace up special packages for special needs. (1)

Recruitment

On the personnel side, recruitment continued to the last to be on a very informal basis, at least for the key personnel who made the character of the organisation. The qualifications either for a section head in London or for an agent in the field were not as such as could be prescribed by any central register, and through all this period recruitment was largely a matter of personal introduction and informal scrutiny.

The staff of the Head Office were of very varied types, and it is rash to generalise.But on the whole men were drawn more from the business and legal world, than from other classes, such as journalists and language teachers, who also have some professional knowledge of life in Europe. Most of the staff, in London as well as overseas, were commissioned into the Army: but professional soldiers were very rare until the last phase, except as liaison officers: professional civil servants were almost unknown. S.O.E. was accused at various times of different forms of

(1) There is a narrative dealing with the Packing Stations, Part IVof the Technical Histories, and Pt.12 of S.O.E. 'AL. History' gives statistics and details of expansion.

political bias, to the Right or to the Left, but this supposed bias is extraordinarily hard to trace in action or in S.O.E. files. The departmental 'esprit de corps' is more noticeable and more intangible than any bias; the interests of S.O.E. and of the Resistance as conceived by them absorbed most of S.O.E.'s members heart and soul, and there is a real note of fanaticism in much of their debate, especially in the all-important middle ranks. But no man could come close to the facts of life under German rule without becoming fanatical, and the energy and labour spent were beyond all praise. S.O.E. was led too far perhaps at times in fighting other departments which it conceived to be deliberately blind to the needs of Europe; S.O.E. was often no less blind to the problems that faced other departments. It was also perhaps led too easily, in its haste and energy, into expenditure of money, materials and manpower, which proved in the end to be wasteful, and it was especially vulnerable to censure on this ground because the ordinary technique of financial control could not be applied. Financial carelessness and even dishonesty is endemic in the class of men from whom agents - even gallant and successful agents - are drawn, and the.-final destination of much of the money sent to the field remains uncertain. But no case has ever been alleged of serious peculation by the H.Q. staff of S.O.E.

The F.A.N.Y.'s

It is worth mentioning one curious exception to the rule of individual recruitment. The F.A.N.Y.'s (who have a long history as a corps since the organisation of the Territorials in Lord Haldane's time) were threatened in the early days of S.O.E. with extinction through the rise of the A.T.S., in

relation to, which they seemed a somewhat archaic and undemocratic anomaly. The process by which they were rescued does not belong to this story: but an informal arrangement was reached in the spring of 1941 between F.A.N.Y. Headquarters and S.O.E. by which members of the corps would be attached to S.O.E. for jobs similar to those filled by the A.T.S. - drivers, personal assistants, wireless operators and so forth. In July 1941 this became a regular arrangement accepted by the Ministry of Labour, and as S.O.E. expanded the F.A.N.Y.'s expanded with it. This was not of course the only war service on which they were employed, but from small beginnings S.O.E. absorbed much the largest part of the Corps, and thus came virtually to possess a woman's auxiliary service of its own. Out of 'some 2, 700 F.A.N.Y.'s raised during the war, 2, 000 were employed by S.O.E.: largely as wireless operators at Grendon and Poundon, but also in a huge variety of other jobs, even in some cases as agents in the field. Like the other women's services, they became absolutely indispensable; and their discretion was impeccable. (1)

The Organisation Overseas.

As we have seen, S.O.E. expanded equally overseas, and by the summer of 1942 its organisation was world-wide. Its Middle East Mission presented a whole series of problems in itself, which have in part been dealt with above. (2) In the Far East (which lies outside this story) a beginning had been made later and on a smaller scale with missions sent to Singapore in April 1941 (3)

(1) There is a narrative of the S.O.E. F.A.N.Y. Unit. (bound as a section of the Administrative History of S.O.E.

(2) See p. 253,

(3) There is a London H.Q. History of the Far East Missions.

and to India in August 1941. By this time these had come together in a Mission at the H,Q. of the Supreme Commander, South-East Asia, which became (like Middle East) a vast organisation in itself, under the leadership of Mr. Colin Mackenzie, who was in charge from 31st August 1941 until the defeat of Japan. This Mission was in touch with Australia (constituted March 1942) for liaison with operations in these Allied theatres. (1)

'British Security Coordination' in New York not only handled liaison with the United States of America, but also controlled a network of missions in the neutral countries of Latin America. Liaison (of a rather formal kind) was established even with the N.K.V.D. in Moscow. (2) All neutral capitals in Europe (Stockholm, Berne, Madrid, Lisbon and Ankara) were covered by important missions, often with 'sub-missions', such as those at Istanbul, Smyrna and Gothenburg; and on British territory there were representatives at Gibraltar, Yalta, Lagos and Durban. In fact there was no relevant part of the globe in which S.O.E. was not represented.

(3)

2. THE OFFENSIVE AGAINSTT S.O.E. , AND ITS RESULTS

S.O.E.'s Standing

Yet in spite of this admirably complete organisation. it cannot be said that S.O.E. was a department much respected in the early part of 1942. Its shortcomings were obvious enough, and not unusual in a department extemporised to execute a task of an entirely novel kind. But its reputation

(1) S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) ‘68 - Far Fast', contains many of the papers regarding the set up of these missions.

(2) Below p. 604-610.

(3) ‘LS/FE/1803 of 8.5.42’ on S.O.E. Archives File (destroyed) 2/340/.1 sets out 'S.O.E. Organisation abroad'.

was out of all proportion to its demerits and took no account of the difficulties which it had to face.

The Effects Security

This was partly a result of the workings of the security system. Security was the first, lesson hammered into the heads of all S.O.E.'s inexperienced staff, and it was a lesson well learnt. From top to bottem, S.O.E.'s doings viere wrapped in slightly ostentatious mystery. The department itself did business with others only under various aliases - Inter-Services Research Bureau, Room 055A, War Office, later M.0.1(S. P.), War Office, H.Q.Special Training Schools, the Joint Technical Board, among others - which were introduced at different times and used in dealings with different departments. Precautions were taken to conceal any connection with the Minister of Economic Warfare and with Mr. Gladwyn Jebb, similarly the identity of Sir Frank Nelson, - Sir Charles Hambro, Brig. Gubbins and the other leading figures was in theory a military secret of a high category.

All this posed an awkward problem. Security was undoubtedly a first condition of S.O.E.'s work: nothing whatever could be achieved unless the whole Organisation was absolutely proof against leakage to the enemy regarding all matters of policy and operations; and with an inexperienced staff it was 'vital that this principle should be religiously observed at the top of the hierarchy which set the tone to the rest of the Organisation. On the other hand it was impossible that a considerable number of eminent men should be withdrawn from their normal occupations without giving rise to gossip: no series of 'cover stories' could be so complete as to provide a convincing picture to their circle of friends of what they were doing in London, when in fact they were doing something

entirely different. (1) Similarly in official contacts with other Government departments: as S.O.E.'s requirements grew, it was impossible that a growing circle of officials should not know, at least in general terms, what S.O.E. was for.

The result of all this was that gossip without knowledge spread fairly widely in influential circles, and that S.O.E. had no means of defence. Its reports on achievement and organisation were documents which could be given only the most limited circulation: and it was not possible for it to justify its bona fides even by an appeal to the previous records of its leading men. There is probably no means by which a secret department can shake off this handicap; and it is a real handicap in a system such as our own in which political influence, even in war, depends largely on informed public opinion.

The Service departments

It was worse for S.O.E. in that it had no natural allies among the older departments, The Service departments were to a limited extent its friends, in so far as it could contribute specifically to military operations: (2) but it occupied only a small corner of their thoughts and could not expect much

(1) Mr. R.R. Stokes, M.P., was notably puzzled and alarmed, and conducted a private campaign of his own which culminated in a Parliamentary Question to the Minister of Information on 20th May 1942, regarding the employment of Sir Charles Hambro, Mr. Brien Clarke, Mr. Sporborg and other S.O.E. officials. Naturally he received no satisfactory reply.(The whole Story is set out in Lord Selborne's Minute to the Prime Minister, of 26th May 1942).

(2) There wan a friendly exchange of letters between Mr. Dalton and Sir Alan Brooke, when the latter took over frcm Sir John Dill in January 1942: and C.I.G.S. discussed S.O.E.’s work personally with Brig. Gubbins at this time. S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) SC.98, and 1/470/1-Pt.II.

consideration if there were a competition for priorities in a matter of first-rate importance. Such a conflict arose only as regards the allocation of aircraft: but aircraft allocation was a matter of life and death not only to S.O.E. but to all three Services. Even in this first phase, when S.O.E.'s needs were relatively small, we have seen the heat generated by the problem of air operations to assist General Sikorski, General De Gaulle and General Mihailovitch.

The Foreign Office

The Foreign Office bore more responsibility than any other department for the creation of S.O.E, as a civilian organisation in July 1940. The Prime Minister's intervention through Major Morton (1) tipped the scales, but the decision to remove subversion from the War Office control could not have been taken without the endorsement of Lord Halifax and Sir Alexander Cadogan. Yet the Foreign Office at first took very little heed of its foster-child. It had not stipulated at the outset for any formal control over S.O.E.: Mr. Dalton was a 'Minister of Cabinet rank', under the general direction of the War Cabinet, but sharing the responsibility of the Government as a whole: he was in no sense the subordinate of the Foreign Secretary. He does not appear to have asked for any general directive on foreign policy (such as he repeatedly obtained from the Chiefs Of Staff on military matters), nor is there any indication that the Foreign Secretary or any other official of. the Foreign Office ever attempted to consider or direct. the activities of S.O.E. as a whole. But there was ceaseless Foreign Office intervention in individual cases; many (but not all) of these have come up in the course of the narrative

(1) Above p. 104,

Greece, Spain, Portugal, Vichy shipping, the status,of De Gaulle, the attitude to be adopted to various Allied governments. There was scarcely a point at which S.O.E.'s action did not involve considerations of foreign policy: and each problem was approached by S.O.E. and by the Foreign Office from opposite points of view. The presence of Mr. Jebb and Mr. Broad in S.O.E. may have eased the situation, but it did little to mend it. From the Foreign Office point of view S.O.E. was an intrusive nuisance with an infinite capacity for diplomatic mischief.

The M.O.I From the Minister of Information nothing could at this time be expected but bitter and deliberate hostility. The battle had been fought in the summer of 1941 for the control of subversive propaganda, and Mr. Bracken had secured a firm footing in the tripartite control of P.W.E. which had once been Mr. Dalton's exclusive domain. It was now his business to eject S.O.E. entirely from the nest, and to reign alone, limited only by the joint responsibility of the Foreign Office - which would be far too preoccupied with other matters to exercise it effectively. The issue became in practice largely a personal one; and unfortunately, during the winter of 1941-42 Mr. Bracken' great talents as a propagandist were largely directed to discrediting Mr. Dalton and all his works, the principal of which was S.O.E.

The S.I.S.

S.I.S. must perhaps also be reckoned among the enemies. As has been pointed out, (1) C.S.S. had at the outset drawn attention to the extraordinary difficulties involved in running two separate secret services in the same,territories. The

(1) Above p. 106.

official view of the S.I.S. was that as they were committed to this dangerous experiment S.O.E. must give such assistance as they could; but that S.I.S.'s own work must have priority and the two organisations must so far as possible be segregated in order to avoid the contaminating contact of S.O.E. The danger was a real one: S.O.E. was a raw and untrained organisation, and (even apart from this) it necessarily worked in an atmosphere fatal to the quiet methods of an intelligence service. In the nature of things, an S.O.E. organisation must eventually expose itself by open violence, and even in its beginnings it must indulge in some political activity and move in circles where recklessness of consequencies is one of the qualifications for leadership. S.I.S. (rightly) felt that its own work paid dividends which must not be endangered; and in this attitude it could count on some support both from the Chiefs of Staff and from the Foreign Office.

So much for principle: unfortunately there is no doubt that relations between the secret departments were also coloured by more personal feelings - the old contrast between the polished product of tradition and the energetic but injudicious parvenu. This was mainly a matter of small incidents on a lower level in both organisations, and it vas only rarely (1) that the trouble involved matters of the slightest historical importance. Formally relations at the top were correct, though distant, in lesser matters the atmosphere was I bad; there is plenty of evidence of the suspicion and dislike which existed between various branches of the two organisations, both in London and in missions overseas.'

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The Reshuffle of Feb1942.

Too much can be made of all these departmental troubles; at the worst there were always individuals who could cooperate excellently with their 'opposite numbers', in spite of strained relationa between departments. But there was certainly in the air early in 1942 a feeling that 'something must be done about S.O.E.'; and the ministerial crisis which arose in February 1942 on quite other grounds was a favourable occasion for a judicious change.

Fortunately for S.O.E. the opposition to it had no alternative programme. No department would lightly put itself forward for the task of taking over and running the organisation: there were various possible candidates - the Foreign Office (direct or through S.I.S.), the War Office, the Ministry of Information, - but none of them emerged as claimants for so uneasy a throne. There was some talk of outright abolition: but this would not bear thinking of in cold blood. There were eight exiled governments, every one of them growing daily more clamorous in its demands for effective aid to its countrymen at home, and the cessation of organised assistance would have made life impossible for the Prime Minister as well ao for the Foreign Office. The Chiefs of Staff equally were bound to insist on the maintenance of Resistance in Europe: any sabotage achieved meantime would be a useful.bonus, and it was profoundly important that when the invasion came some native organisations should rise to meet it. In the absence of any effective system of government on the spot, an expedition might easily be strangled by the weight of its commitment for the good order and maintenance of the civil population.

The solution therefore was not drastic. Mr. Dalton passed to a higher office, and was succeeded by Lord Selborne, whose personality was in itself an essential part of the solution. He was. a Conservative, and as such a sufficient answer to the allegation that S.O.E. was concerned primarily to foment social revolution: yet he was a Conservative who had never been tied closely to the party machine, and no one who knew him could suspect that S.O.E. would now become an organ of reaction. He was an experienced administrator, well-known for his part in the successful campaign to put some energy and humanity into the administration of the Post Office. He was a personal friend of the Minister of Information, and was one, of those who had been with Mr. Churchill in the wilderness after 1931. He was a grandson of the great Lord Salisbury, and, though without personal experience at the Foreign Office, he could surely be depended on to understand its point of view and to make it part of his policy to maintain good relations with it.

The only important change in the scope of the department was that the Minister no longer took any part in the direction of P.W.E. Some changes were later negotiated in its relation, to the Foreign Office and to the S. I. S. , which will be referred to more fully below: (1) but they did not involve any drastic change in Position. There were also a few internal changes. Mr. Jebb had come to the department to give personal assistance to Mr. Dalton, and it was natural that he should return to his Foreign Office career as soon as the new Minister had time to establish himself. When he left early in May, the ambiguous

(1) Below p. 525 and 585/6 resp.

post of Chief Executive Officer was abolished, and Mr. Sporborg took over in a position more analogous to that of Principal Private Secretary. (1) Sir Frank Nelson had borne the main burden of creating a vast organisation out of nothing, and the permanence of its main framework is the best testimonial. to his work. But he was by this time a very sick man, and could not continue. He was replaced in May by Sir Charles Hambro, who had already acted as his Deputy.

The 'Playfair' Report

Other changes in organisation were mainly minor and consequential. But to meet the charges of maladministration a Committee was appointed on 12th May 1942, consisting of an eminent business man, Mr. John Hanbury-Williams, and an able Treasury official, Mr. E.W. Playfair, to report to the Minister 'on what improvements, alterations or extensions, if any, in the existing S.O.E. machine are necessary or desirable to enable S.O.E. fully to carry out the duties devolving on it under its Charter'.

Their report (dated 18th June) generally endorses what Lord Selborne had already written to the Prime Minister on 10th April, (2) summing up his first impressions of his task - 'much good work has been performed by zealous and patriotic men: if S.O.E. is to function it must receive fair play as ivell as give it.' The Playfair Report (as it is generally called) acquits the London H.Q. of S.O.E. of all the charges of nepotism, waste, corruption and incompetence which had been freely circulated, and admits no more than the inevitable incoherence of a newly formed secret organisation. It is

(1) S.O.E. Archives File 2/340/3.1, CD/OR/1731 of 8th May 1942, refers.

(2) Circulated as W.P.(42)170.

less favourable to the Missions overseas, where men had to be chosen hastily, and could not be supervised an quickly replaced (as they could in London) if they proved to be the wrong men for the job. On the larger issues of departmental organisation. it analyses the situation excellently, bringing out the impending change in the direction of S.O.E.'s work: 'When it first started, it had a programme of its own, correlated with but largely independent of day-to-day strategical developments. In a not very distant future, it may be destined to provide an integral part of the military machine'. Here the main practical problem is that of developing Brig. Gubbins's Directorate, of Operations and Training, so as to become in effect a 'Mission for Western Europe', capable if necessary of detachment from Headquarters so as to work closely vrith the military cornard in the event of invasion. The Report considers also the question of appointing a professional soldier as head of S.O.E, ; it sums up against it, but recommends that consideration should be given to the appointment of a military Chief of Staff.

As regards details, the main criticism was of the system by which eight separate branches, of approximately equal status, reported direct to C.D. and D/CD: this organisation, (which grew up piece-meal) clearly threw too much weight on the heads of the organisation, and the difficulty had been met in November 1941 (1) by creating the post of 'Chief of Staff ' (Colonel G.F. Taylor) to perform what were in effect the functiom of a central planning

(1) 'Re-organisation of London H.Q.' CD/OR/494/10 of 12th November 1941 - copy on S.O.E. Archives File 2/340/3.1.

and secretariat branch. The Report reaches the conclusion that this had led to duplication and confusion of channels, and it recommends the solution shown in the Chart attached as Appendix E, which gives the position as it was in July 1942. Here the 'Chief of Staff' has disappeared and the hierarchy is made more elaborate. One deputy (this was, from July 1942 to March 1943, Mr. Hanbury-Williams himself) is responsible for administrative services, and (through Colonel Taylor) for the affairs of Missions overseas. The other (Brig. Gubbins) brings together all the country sections whose operations are based on England, and with them the services directly ancillary to operations - there were strong grounds for including training among these. This block of directorates would in due course constitute S.O.E.'s 'invasion team' .

The other 'Playfairl recommendations affecting H.Q. turn mainly on details of financial control and on such matters as the pay and promotion of such S.O.E. officials as had been commissioned into the Army. As regards the Missions overseas, their most important suggestion is that a high officer of S.O.E. should be appointed Inspector of Missions and should visit all overseas missions at least once a year. The Report here puts its finger on an important point. The state of world communications in 1941 and 1942 was such that a continuous interchange of officers between theatres was virtually impossible; once detached on a mission an officer was out off from home, except for the opaque medium of the cipher telegram, and he would receive visits from high officers of his organisation 'only at moments of crisis when they are bound ... to appear as something like a witch-hunt'. This would perhaps have cured itself once the Yediterranean was open and aircraft were

available in reasonable numbers for communications. The office of 'Controller of Missions' was however set up in July 1942 (1) and was held by Colonel G.F. Taylor until its abandonment in April 1943.

3. THE MECHANISM OF INTER-DEPARTMENTAL RELATIONS

(a) The Foreign Office

It is unnecessary to summarise here once again the Foreign Office's grievances against S.O.E. It should however be made plain that S.O.E. was no less anxious about the damage to British interests which might be done by the Foreign Office. One or two quotations will suffice. 'I feel that the Foreign Office still regards us as nasty people who run around with explosives and that they do not really understand what subversive warfare entails'. (2) 'Vacillation, delays, indecision and perhaps even obstruction'. (3) 'My personal view is that the Foreign Office do not wish to be burdened with the responsibility for S.O.E. ; but wish to control it by means of a "Treaty" and by means of steadfast and settled obstruction, until it has been reduced to an innocuous bomb disposal squad'. (4)

Much of this was a matter of overstrained nerves; each Department attributed to the other as its settled policy what was merely the result of overwork, bewilderment and bad organisation. But it was not a situation which could be left to settle itself,

(1) CD/OR/2473 of 8th July 1942 - S.O.E. Archives File 2/340/3.1

(2) Brig. Gubbins – M/XX/342 of 18th February 1942.

(3) Sir Frank Nelson - CD/XX/423 of 18th February 1942..

(4) Sir Frank Nelson - CD/OR/550 of 7th April 1942.
(Refs.(2), (3), (4) S.O.E. Archives File (AD/3.1) F/104/2 refers).

and the line of approach chosen was the negotiation of a 'Treaty' - a fair specimen of what Sir Frank Nelson in one place calls 'the curious compromises and expedients of British administration'. (1) With all deference to the Foreign Office, it is singular that their approach to the problem of subversion, now that it was forced upon them, was to devise a document laying down at great length what S.O.E. should not do.

The negotiations were opened by a letter f~rcm Mr. Eden on 4th February forwarding a memorandum by Sir Alexander Cadogan, (2) which appeared to imply the reduction of S.O.E. to the status of a subsidiary of the Foreign Office controlled by a high official, on the analogy of S.I.S. Mr. Dalton returned a conciliatory reply on 10th February drawing attention to some of the difficulties which this would involve, (3) and the Ministers met on 12th February. The first draft of an agreement was produced by Mr. Jebb on 13th February. Discussion of this did not proceed far before the change of Ministers on 22nd February, which interrupted this piece of business until early April. The 'Treaty' was never formally signed by the two Ministers, nor approved by any higher authority, but both Departments accepted as binding the text agreed between Sir Alexander Cadogan and Mr. Jebb on 15th May 1942.

This document is of such importance that it is printed in full as an Appendix, (4) and it need not be sunmarised here. It was not submitted either to the Prime Minister or to the War Cabinet, or to any other departnent: yet in effect it is much more than a gloss on the original charter framed by

(1) CD/XX/524 of 27th March 1942.
(2) COPY on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/104/2.
(3) " " " "

(4) Appendix D.

SECRET

Mr. Chamberlain and approved by the War Cabinet in July 1940 In. some respects it constitutes a new charter, much more elaborate than the first, but noless anomalous,

First, on the constitutional side. Here two contradictory propositions stand side by side:

(a) As it is put in the Playfair Report: (1) 'S.O.E. is an executive and operational and not a policy-making body.' Its position would be thus analogous to that of a public corporation or. of a Commander-in-Chief in the field, not to that of a Department of State. 'While ... S.O.E. have a right to advance opinions and conduct operations on their own, they execute the policy of His Majesty's Government as laid down in their respective spheres by the Chiefs of Staff, the Foreign Office and other Departments of State.' (2)

(b) Yet it is directed by a Minister of the Crown - a full Minister, not an Under-Secretary - and 'As a Minister of the Crown, the Minister of' Economic Warfare has, in his capacity as head of S.O.E., a general right of appeal against an adverse decision by a Department to any particular proposal of his. On all matters affecting operations the suitable court of appeal would be the Defence Committee.' (3) In other words, S.O.E. is a Ministry and not an 'executive agency': the Minister can challenge the action of

(1) Para. 4(b).
(2) Foreign Office Treaty, para. 3.
Foreign Office Treaty, para. 6.

any other department by appeal to the Prime Minister, the War Cabinet or the Defence Committee, as appropriate in each case.

Doubt still surrounds the exact constitutional status of that unexpected product of the 'Ministers of the Crown Act, 1937', a Minister of Cabinet rank who is not a member of the Cabinet. But clearly his responsibility (whatever it is) is one which he bears himself. He is perhaps free of responsibility for the general policy of the Government, except for his private responsibility as a member of the Party in power. But as regards the conduct of his department there is no doubt that he is fully responsible, legally to the Crown and politically to Parliament: the responsibility cannot be shaken off or limited by any agreement with another department. It is either nonsensical or irrelevant to add (1) "It is understood that the Minister will only exercise his right of appeal in regard to matters which seem to him of the first importance from the point of view of the conduct of special operations": this-is not a matter on which the Minister can be bound without ceasing to be a Minister. These constitutional points are-of some substantial importance; the British constitution may be only a matter of ‘working arrangements’ - but this is certainly not an arrangement which will work. The more precise instructions as to S.O.E.’s work are equally elusive. For one thing, it is clear that the Foreign Office were hankering after a convenient distinction between 'sabotage' and 'subversion': war which is a matter for

(1) Foreign Office Treaty, last sentence of para. 6.

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the Chiefs of Staff, and politics which is a matter for the Foreign Office. (1) This is strangely archaic in itself, and the earlier narrative will have shown that it was meaningless in relation to the operations of S.O.E. With rare exceptions (Norway and Denmark are the strongest cases), every saboteur and guerilla was a politician: not every politician was a saboteur, but every politician's career depended on harnessing the potential saboteurs to his own purposes. Nothing could be done by S.O.E. which did not have political implications: S.O.E. saw this and believed that the Foreign Office could not be blind to it except of set purpose - they must be attempting to control and strangle the whole work of S.O.E. , under the plea of. specious distinctions. In fact, the Foreign Office seem to have believed in all seriousness that a valid distinction existed.

This is borne out by the care which was taken to divide the whole world into five zones, to each of which different considerations should apply.

(a) Enemy and occupied territories. Here military directives are paramount: only the 'political line' is to be taken from the Foreign Office.

(b) Vichy territories - the 'Foreign Office have a special interest in those areas', and nothing is to be done without general Foreign Office authority.

(1) e.g. Mr. Jebb's F/3299/104 of 17th February 1942 to C.D. – ‘We (.Sir Alexander Cadogan and Mr. Jebb) had a long argument on this point and I more or less got him to say that in practice the two’ (sabotage and subversion) 'could not be sharply distinguished: but he nevertheless was very keen on some specific reference to Sabotage being put among the ‘purposes of S.O.E.’.

(a) Neutral territories. 'Here the interests of foreign policy are predominant' (whatever that may mean), and there is no action without specific Foreign Office authority.

(d) In unoccupied Allied countries: S.O.E.'s interests are small, but can be freely pursued, on agreement by S.O.E. with the Allied government concerned.

(e) Finally, Latin American states (whether belligerent or neutral) are to be as much a Foreign Office preserve as neutral countries.

It cannot be said that any of these provisos are at all clear, except (c) and (e), which relate to areas of little importance in the general picture of foreign policy. The vital countries of occupied Europe - Prance, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, - remain in a T~osition as ambiguous as before: and the position as regards enemy countries is almost.equally vague, except tnat all peace feelers mast at once be referred to the Foreign Office.

It is impossible to believe that the 'Treaty' &d anything to improve the conduct of business, and major rows were not much less common than before. But on the whole minor friction decreased. This was partly due to increased experience on both sides, partly also to the growing paramountcy of the military, in particular of the.Americans; but it was also important that Lord Selborne made it a cardinal point of his policy that S.O.E. should go along with the Foreign Office in all cases where cooperation was possible. We have already seen his attitude in regard to Greece, (1) and there will be other examples later.

(1) Above p. 234.

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There was also some talk at this stage of improvement in formal arrangements for liaison, in particular of the appointment of a Foreign Office liaison officer to S.O.E. - after Mr. Jebb had left there was no professional diplomat in S.O.E.'s Staff. No action was taken on this until August 1943 when Mr. Houstoun Boswall, C.M.G., M.C., was given an office in Baker Street for liaison duties. The only step forward at the moment was the constitition of a Foreign Office - S.O.E. liaison committee, (1) which met once a fortnight from 19th May 1942. the representatives at first were Sir Orme Sargent, Sir Maurice Peterson, Sir David Scott and Mr. William Strang on one side, Sir Charles Hambro, Mr. J. Hanbury-Williams, Col. George Taylor, and Lt.Col. Sporborg on the other. This too must have helped to ease matters on minor issues, though major disturbances were beyond its scope.

(b) The Chiefs of Staff

Relations with the Foreign Office were thus essentially negative: S.O.E. asked for no general directives and was given none. (2) A much more Positive attitude was adopted throughout by the Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Planners, and there is a long series of papers which constitute S.O.E.'s strategic directives.

(1) S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/104/5 gives early correspondence and Minutes of first meetings.

(2) The only positive proposal by the Foreigai Office which I have found is a suggestion for the recruitment of suitable British to act as a 'fifth column' in neutral countries, which was brought up to the J.I.C. in March 1941 (J.I.C.(41)127). This contrasts oddly with the Foreign, Office's usual attitude and its origin is obscure. The approach was rather crossly received by S.O.E., which felt it had the job in hand already, and the discussion petered out. (some papers on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1).

There was no formal liaison (1) until Lt.Col. D.R. Guineas was appointed as S.O.E. liaison officer with the Chiefs of Staff Secretariat in January 1942: and even then he was accommodated in Baker Street, not in the Cabinet Offices. (2) But personal relations were excellent between S.O.E.'s officers an the one side wid the Chiefs of Staff Secretariat and J.P.S. on the other. Things went a little less smoothly on the higher levels: Mr. Jebb, Sir Frank Nelson or Brig. Gubbins would nominally be summoned to a Chiefs of Staff meeting where S.O.E. was directly concerned, but there were some mishaps, and in any case S.O.E was not summoned of its interest (though real) was only indirect. There was complaint that chances were thus missed, because S.O.E. was not consulted in the formative stage of discussion: and, at intervals S.O.E. reasserted the view (3) that it was the Fourth Arm of modern war, and could not be effectively used unless it were given full membership of the C.O.S., the J.P.S. and the J.I.C. (4) But debate an this controversy was never pushed very far, and the system worked happily enough without a solution of the point of principle.

We have already dealt with the general directives which prescribed S.O.E.'s task in the autumn of 1940. (5) These

(1) Fortnightly progress reports were made by S.O.E. to the C.O.S. from 11th January 1942 to 1st March 1942: thereafter monthly. These are not very intelligible taken by themselves, and were rarely discussed by the C.O.S.

(2) Minute from C.D. to C.E.O. dated 22nd January 1942 on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1)SC/98. This was the upshot of discussion at a C.O.S.. meeting in December 1941 - mentioned in memo, C. D. to C.E.O. of 22nd December 1941, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1 SC./98. Lt.Col. Guiness was succeeded by Lt.Col. Rowlandson in December 1942.

(3) For the formal authority for it, see above p. 121.

(4) In this period see for instance Brig. Gubbins to the J. P. S. 22nd April 1942, on S.O.. E, Archives File 1/470/1 Part II.

(5) Above p. 132.

documents were all couched in very broad terms, and gave almost unlimited scope. In due course a point was reached at which S.O.E could be given limited and attainable objectives within a detailed operational plan: but only the first steps in this development had been taken by the summer of 1942.

. Many of the more detailed references in Chiefs of Staff discussion have already been mentioned, and it is not necessary to revert to them: they became progressively more numerous as the war goes on, until finally there is scarcely a C.O.S. meeting which does not contain some reference to S.O.E. Perhaps five 'sequences' of general discussion can be traced separately in this period, though the division is in some ways arbitary.

(i) March 1941

First, there was the C.O.S. meeting of 31st March 1941, (1) which had before it papers on 'The Organisation and Method of *Vorking of S.O.2', (2) on S.O.2 projects, and on S.O.2's outline plan,for 'Claribel' (action in the event of German invasion). S.O.E.'s generalities were still very general. and skated over a great many uncertainties with an air of confidence. There is nothing on strategic policy which represents any new departure, and the Chiefs of Staff do not appear to have discussed the policy paper at length, although it was 'noted with approval'. The main points recorded in the Minutes are in relation to 'Claribel'. 'Claribell was to be kept in being, although no 'target date' for completion should be given. But it was not to be given absolute priority: some of the personnel earmarked for 'Claribel' could be employed on. other secondary tasks, others could treat 'Claribel'

(I) C.O. S.(41)9th Mtg. (0) Item 1 of 31st March.

(2) Dated 26th March 1941, copy headed 'S.O.2' on S.O.E Archives File 1/470/1.

for the present as secondary. This to some extent cleared the decks of a cumbrous and unpromising operation, though it remained formally in existence for some time longer.

(ii) The F.Ops paper Mav-June 1941

From this develops almost at once a second step, in which S.O.E. is working pretty closely in combination w-ith the F.Ops Section of J.P.S. (under Mr. Oliver Stanley) on the preparation of a detailed study of the future course of the war. Part of the development of their ideas can be traced from S.O.E. papers. On 2nd April Colonel Anstruther (who was then S.O.E.'s 'Planning Officer') had a long discussion with F.Ops, on which he reports (1) that they were looking ultimately to the creation of a British striking force of six armoured and four infantry divisions; so small a force could only be effective in conjunction with 'a universal uprising of oppressed peoples' . 'The harassing and mopping up of the German armed forces will have to be done by irregular bands of nationals of the countries. This means that S.O.E. will have to organise and equip guerillas on a vast scale'. Here the Sten gun, the characteristic weapon of the Resistance, appears in S.O.E.'s papers for the first time, and a requirement for a million of them is suggested. (2) But what the F.Ops want is a more detailed estimate of S.O.E.'s requirements for all-out guerilla war.

There were two S.O.E. answrers to this request. One was a general paper on 'The Prospects of Subversion', (3) which rehearses yet again tle case for subversion – 'Subversion is

(1) Copy - S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1.

(2) At least 650,000 were in the end used by S.O.E. (App.B. to Section A of 'Supplies History')

(3) COPY On S.O.E, Archives File 1/470/1.

a weapon which we can use offensively and continuously wherever the enemy's interests can be reached. Intangible and elusive, it is a form of attack which exerts a constant pressure and constitutes a continuous strain on his resources and his will'. It is all very ably done - is indeed right and convincing - but it does not advance matters much. Its conclusion is to ask the Chiefs of Staff to endorse the policy suggested, and 'to make available to S.O.E. the men and materials' (particularly aircraft) 'necessary for carrying it out'. But it does not indicate how many men and how many aircraft - what is the Allied commitment involved? It admits (as it must) that subversion ‘ultimately depends for its success on the armed forces': but it does not attempt to show how much the armed forces will have to be weakened in order to strengthen the guerillas. As General Ismay wrote to Mr. Jebb in acknowledging receipt of the paper, 'Much as we may deplore it, the C.O.S. are at present faced with the problem of having to feed many hungry mouths with bread, on which the butter has to be spread very sparingly. ... To sum up, I feel sure that the C.O.S. would agree, in principle, with your paper, but I am positive that they would not be prepared to give you the carte blanche for which you ask.’ (1)

This problem of specific material requirements was tackled for the first time by Brig. Gubbins in a paper dated 21st May, 1941, with explosive effect. (2) Here the plan emerges more clearly, in three phases-.-

(1) Letter of 24th April 1941 - quoted in 'History of Special Duty Operations in Europe’ p. 14,
(2) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1.

(1) The organisation and equipment of a sabotage system in the occupied territories.

(2) The organisation and equipment of underground armies in occupied territories.

(3) The ultimate revolt, which can only be effective if given some regular stiffeningfor this purpose the Allied contingents in Britain must be retrained as airborne shook troops, who must be flown in as soon as the guerillas can receive mass drops of parachutists and capture an airfield.

This is unmistakably the correct solution, and it was in effect that ultimately adopted - and where it was not adopted risings failed catastrophically. But its implications were alarming, when worked out for three typical countries, Poland Czechoslovakia and France. A few figures will illustrate this.

A. Sabotage Grours of 7 men.

.	Poland (1,000 Groups)	Czech (700 Groups)	France (350 Grours)	Total
Sub-machine-guas	7,000	4,900	2,450	14,350
Wireless sets	1,318	962	458	2,758
Plastic Explosives (lbs.)	54,000	58,800	28,400	171,200 lbs. (77 tons)
Parachute containers	5,000	3,500	1,575	10,075
Aircraft Sorties	1,250	875	394	2,519

B. Secret Armies

	Poland (84 Bns)	C zech (100 Bns)	France (70 Bns)	Total
Light Machine Guns	5,124	6,ioo	4,270	15,500
Sub-machine Guns	13,112	16,800	11,760	42,000
Pistols	43,680	52,000	36,400	132,000
Wireless Sets	1,260	1,500	980	3,770
Containers	10,500	12,500	7,875	30,875
Aircraft Sorties	2,625	3,125	1,968	7,718

These are merely extracts: the original paper gives the scale of equipment in detail. In some senses the figures are no more than a 'pipe-dream'. Brig. Gubbins did not forget that there were all sorts of incalculable factors - it would be a remarkable piece of organisation (for instance) if the equipment reached the Resistance with less than 25-30 per cent wastage from enemy action: abortive aircraft sorties must be allowed for: and so forth. But most of these imponderables tended to increase rather than reduce his figures: and no one could say that his scale of equipment was too high for guerillas whose target was to be the German army, even in its decline, or that rebellions would have been worth staging with smaller forces. Yet this very limited force would require some 8,OOO aircraft sorties: what that meant in aircraft would depend on how many months were allowed - if the job wcre to be done by the spring of 1942 it would require 444 aircraft, Practically all of which must be heavy bombers and would not be available for any other Operations at moon periods. This would be reduced if a longer period were allowed: to allow till spring 1943 would almost halve the aircraft commitment. Finally there remained the shock and support troops on whose arrival the fate

of the risings would depend: as always, the aircraft requirement for airborne troops depends on how many must be taken in one lift, and what wastage is expected on each lift. The figure for 620 aircraft for this purpose is the only figure in the paper which might with good fortune prove to be a maximum.

Even in the autumn of 1941 S.O.E. had 8 Whitleys and 5 Halifaxes available in No. 138 Squadron: in the Mediterranean it had two antique Wellesleys. When Brig. Gubbins' paper was written the operational strength of Bomber Command included only 90 heavy bombers. (1) The Blitz was not yet over, the invasion of Europe was still a distant dream, and the minds of strategists and plain men were full of the possibilities of the Bomber. The Air Staff were 'working on a new programme which contemplated a force of 4,000 heavy bombers by the spring of 1943: (2) a project which was only within the bounds of possibility granted absolute concentration both of British and American resources on this one target. There could not be a less favourable time at which to talk of the diversion of aircraft from the attack on Germany and when it was put in this way the problem of subversion at once began to come into sharper perspective.

Brig. Gubbins's paper was forwarded to the F.Ops on 21th May 1941: on 27th May they discussed it with Lt.Col. R.H. Barry, on 29th May with Mr. Sporborg. Their comments are recorded in Minutes by Brig. Gubbins (3) and Mr. Sporborg, and traverse the whole basis of S.O.E.'s programme. There are two lines of argument -

(1) Out of a total orerational strength of 842. Figures supplied by Air Ministry (Central Statistical Branch).

(2) J.P.(41)374(0), 4th Draft, para. 197.

(3) Both dated 30th Lay 1941, in S. 0. F~ Archives File 1/470/l. See also Sir Charles Hambro's minute of 1st J urie.

(a) First, that of broad strategic theory. It is admitted by Mr. Sporborg 'that our secret army however good and however well equiped could never retake Norway itself. It could play an extremely useful role resulting in considerable economy of force, but it could never play a principal role.

From this admission the reasoning runs as follows:

If a Secret Army can only act as an auxiliary and not as a principal, it cannot be used except in the event of the British landing a force in its territory.

There can be no British landing in face of overwhelming German land forces until we have overwhelming air superiority.

When we have air superiority and are fully armed, we will probably find that our air superiority can be decisive without any military operations at all.

On the foregoing assumptions, the Secret Army would never be used, except perhaps to stage a final massacre of Huns about a week before the Armittice.

This is logical enough but too absolute to be convincing. So 1ong as we stood alone, it was true that an army of 10 divisions could not defeat one of 250 divisions unless a miracle was achieved by the . air superiority which was undoubtedly possible with the resources of America at our backs: and it was defeatism to doubt the miracle. 'Such a force as 4,000 heavy bombers would introduce a new scale of destruction into war, and all things were possible

for it. But there was scarcely enough analysis of what the miracle would look like when it came to pass: it must clearly in the end be a psychological rather than a physical miracle - no physical destruction from the air would be enough to redress the balance - and the right make-up of the bomber loads might well turn out to be as much a question of politics and psychology as of high explosives.
(b) Thus far S.O.E. had a reasonable though unpopular case: but it was on weaker ground if strategy were looked at more concretely. The sabotage plan would require 15 per cent of the existing bomber force, the secret armies would require 40 per cent: a large part of this would be directed to creating risings in Poland and Czechoslovakia, because they gave the best geographical and political scope for secret armies: but when the time came these risings could not be given the air support (and the supplies and reinforcements from the air) which would be necessary to give them a fair chance. As an operation of war, then, Secret Armies in the East must be abandoned, and effort must be concentrated on France, Belgium, Holland and Norway, where something real moght be achieved with a very much smaller expenditure of aircraft. This appears conclusive on its own ground: but unfortunately it reckoned without the Poles and Polish politics it is hard enough to leave an army to perish unsupported, impossible to leave a nation.

F.Ops great paper (1) was by this time already in draft and allocated a large role both to sabotage and Secret Armies.

(1) J.P.(41)374 (0) of 2nd June 1941.

The former figured prominently in the programme for economic war

(Paras. 156-160): the plan for the coup de grace was based entirely on the latter (paras. 255-280). So important a Place did S.O.E. fill in the picture that at one point (paras. 159-160) the F.Ops by implication endorsed S.O.E.'s claim to be a Fourth Arm, entitled to equal representation on every level: but the two points set out above, which answered Brig..Gubbins' paper, were not included, and it was left to future discussion (para. 273) to work out the detailed implications of the final rising.

All this labour (unfortunately) was overtaken by events. It was already clear to a small circle that the attack on Russia was impending, and it came 1 on 22nd June. The F.Ops had Allowed for this contingency. but only as a contingency, and their paper as a whole could not be based on it. It therefore became obsolete at once, and perished in draft. (1) On 3rd July Mr. J ebb saw Mr. Oliver Stanley and the F.Ops, who were then about to set to work anew. Their labours ultimately bore fruit in C.0.S.(41)155 (0) of 31st July, which got a little further, but seems also to have perished before reaching the Defence Committee. In this the references to Subversion (paras. 33-35) were greatly watered dawn;

(1) Cf. the Prime Minister's remark at the Defence Committee Meeting of 25th June (D.0.(41)44th) which had before it JP(41)444: 'he was not convinced of the value of such papers for distribution to Dominion Governments or Cs-in-C. Much of the contents became rapidly out of date and statements were falsified before they were read. I
See also Mr. J ebb's Minute of 3rd July 1941 on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1.

it was plainly hinted that its priority for aircraft must be relatively low, and no more was expected from it than that 'these methods will make a substantial contribution to the offensive'. In fact, now that Russian manpower was in the field the manpower of Occupied Europe became a rather secondary matter. Furthermore, the political situation had become confused and unpredictable.

(iii) The Outline Plan of July 1941

For the purposes of this revised paper F.Ops had called in haste for a moderate and practical plan by S.O.E. for operations in the immediate future. This took shape as the 'Outline Plan of S.O.2 Operations from 1st September 1941 to 1st October 1942', dated 15th July, which deserves separate treatment. The paper was forwarded by Mr. Dalton to the Prime Minister on 16th July and referred by him to the Chiefs of Staff: (1) S.O.E.'s operational programme was thus submitted for decision independently of the proposed 'bible' of British strategy, and before any 'bible' had been adopted.

The paper is a formidable document, which occupies 16 foolscap pages with its annexes (many of them in statistical form): so that it cannot be sumarised very fully here. For the first time one has a statement of policy that looks like a General Staff study and not like an academic essay on the theory of modern war. Discussion of the general role of Subversion is concluded in a single paragraph, and the paper proceeds to give 'the minimum programme which will make a really effective contribution without excessive demands on the R.A.F.' (para.4). The assumption is made that the earliest date for action is the autumn of 1942, and confirmation of this is requested.

(1) Circulated by them as C.0.S.(41)147 (0) of 21 st July.

The plaii itself clearly shows the effects of comment on Brig. Gubbins's trial balloon of 21st May. The scale of operations is greatly reduced, and the Secret Armies of Poland and Czechoslovakia have been abandoned. The programme is now (for a date postponed by six months) reduced to:-

	Saboteurs	Secret Armies	Aircraft Sorties 1 Sept. 41 to 1 Oct. 42
Norway	500	19,000	315
Denmark	500	-	36
Holland	.1,000	5,000	265
Belgium	700	.6,000	300
France	3,000	24, 000	1,200
Poland	2,000	-	130
Czechoslovakia	1,200	-	88

This has come down from 10,237 aircraft sorties to 2,334;these cover more territory, but much of it within a more economical range of operation. Only 60 sorties are asked for to the Balkans. (1) S.O.E. wisely refrain (para.13) from estimating how many aircraft would be needed to do the job - there are too many imponderables such as weather conditions, navigational equipmeht, casualty rate, range and speed of aeroplanes available. But as an illustration one may say that the programme involved an average, summer and winter, of about 180 successful sorties a month: on the average, an aircraft would do well to find its target and deliver four

(1) In the event there seem to have been 280 successful aircraft sorties frcm the U.K. during the period ccntemplated.: there are no proper figures for the Balkans, but there cannot have been more than 20 successful sorties there, at the most.

times a month. Thus the scale indicated is an establishment of 40 to 50 medium bombers: say three squadrons.This was more than the Air Ministry was likely to accept: but it was not an unreasonable allocation to demand out of a bomber force which had now reached squadrons.

The paper was also reasonable in stressing that the Chiefs of Staff need not accept the programme as a whole: Secret Armies could be eliminated, or some countries might be cut out. But there must be a plan: ‘without a regular plan on a considerable scale, thought out and approved well in advance, there is grave risk that, if at some future date (which may well coincide with a most critical phase of the war) S.O.2 are ordered to press the button which would cause a European explosion, the result would be either a succession of feeble reports, or a flicker and a splutter'. The immediate conclusion:is that there must be a very early decision, which would constitute authority for.detailed collaboration with the Air Ministry, the War Office, S.I.S.. (for wireless communications), and Allied governments.

The Joint Planners commented fully an this paper on 9th August. (1) It was inevitable that a good deal of' water should be added to S.O.E.'s wine. Sabotage is to be adjusted to the bomber plan (para.3): 'it would be unsound to sacrifice the effectiveness of our bombing effort to subversive activities' (para.12): the requirements of S.I.S. must not be interfered with (para.12)- the demands for equipment must be postponed to the equipment of British forces (para.15). But the Joint Planners did recommend the increase of No.1419 Flight to a full

(1) J.P.(41)649 of 9thAugust.

squadron: a great increase in wireless facilities, an allocation of 25 per cent of what was required for Secret Armies in France, Holland and Belgium by the spring of 1942. They did give a specific order of priority - Northern Frarce, Belgium, Holland, Norway, in that order - and some other explicit suggestions. The greatest set-back perhaps was that they refused to accept S.O.E.'s document as a true 'Outline Plan': it must be treated as 'more in the nature of a target to be aimed at' (para. 17) - a 'Cook-shy' which was probably too ambitious, but could hardly even be criticised until more experience had been gained. The framing of a real 'plan' was adjourned to the spring of 1942.

S.O.E. decided not to fight on any of these issues (1) -after a1l the J.P.S. were on very strong ground - and there was no serious controversy before the Chiefs of Staff, who discussed the paper with the Joint Intelligence Committee on 14th August, (2) a:nd with Mr. Jebb and Brig. Gubbins on 15th August. (3) On policy, it was minuted only that 'subversive activities should be given every encouragement', (4) but certain practical points were covered which implied authority to go ahead with the plan:- (5)

(1) Mr. Jebb to General Ismay 12th August 1010, on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1.

(2) C.O.S. (41)287th Mtg. Item 10, 14th August.
(3) C.O.S. (41)288th Mtg. Item 14.

(4) See also Brig. Gubbins's minute giving a fuller account, dated 17th August 1941, copy on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1.

(5) On 18th August Mr. Jebb asked General Ismay to write Mr. Dalton more specifically on this point: I have not found any such letter from General Ismay.

(a) Sabotage should be generally directed in accordance with the bombing policy aim.

(b) The Air Ministry would provide a squadron as soon as possible,

(c) The provision of sorties for S.O.2 should not be allowed to interfere with the requirements of S.I.S.

(d) The War Office would report on the availability of arms and equipment, and Secret Armies would then be discussed again.

(e) The Admiralty would try to provide a suitable ship at Gibraltar for infiltration into the South of France and North Africa.

On 20th August &eneral Ismay notified the Prime Minister of the Chiefs of Staff conclusions, and there matters rested for the present. (1) No. 138 Squadron was formed in the autumn of 1941 out of No. 1419 Flight, and a second squadron (:No. 161) began to form in February 1942. The C.I.G.S.. reported that the equipment required for Secret Armies could in the main be made available if adequate notice was given. (2) On 24th October C.D. formally called on all heads of Country Sections to prepare detailed plans in consultation with Brig. Gubbins's department, and to keep careful records of achievement during the winter’s campaign.

One summary (3) gives the following figures which serve to indicate what became of this first concrete plan: -

(1) Copies on S.O.E- Archives Files 1/470/1 and SC.98 (AD/S.1)

(2) C.O.S. (41)536 dated 31st August 1941, approved by C.O.S. (41)309th Mtg. Item 4. also C.0.S.(41)219(0) of 28th September, and C.O.S.(41)339th Mtg. Item 1, of 1st October.

(3) Progress Report frcm ‘A.D.' to ‘C.E.O. dated I 8th January 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S. 1) SC.98.

1st September 1941 - 15th January 1942

Country	Successful Sorties	Unsuccessful Sorties (no details)	Agents Dropped	Containers and Packages
Norway	1		2	2
Denmark	1		1	
Holland	2		4	-
Belgium	4		8	7
France	13		27	14
Poland	3		15	6
Czechoslovakia	2		8	6
Totals	26	27	66	36

We have already seen what this meant in preparation and perplexity in each of these countries: the effort it represented was very much larger than would appear, either from the figures or from the visible development of resistance. But it was far from satisfying the Allies, and their discontent became a general offensive in the spring of 1942 under the leadership of General Sikorsk:i. The issue vas also forced by General Marshall who was in Lcndon in April, pressing for a resolute attempt to plan the invasion of Europe in 1942. These two threads, relations with the Allies and plans for invasion, run closely parallel, but it may be clearest to follow each in isolation.

(iv) Allied Pressure. April-June1942.

General Sikorski had intervened at what was obviously a decisive crisis of strategy with a paper strongly supporting the creation of a Second Front in Europe. (1) One passage in this was aimed directly at S.O.E, The resistance of the occupied countries "will carry far greater significance than

(1) C.O.S.(42)101(0) of 15th April, C.O.S.(42)122nd Mtg. Item 5 of 17th April, and related papers.

is generally supposed, provided that the effort of the united nations will be directed on uniform lines, prepared methodically and coordinated with the whole war plan' 'A common Staff should be established for all the countries In Europe under German occupation. This Staff should consist of General Staff officers of those occupied countries which may be seriously considered in connection with the future armed risings'. This 'common Allied staff' would in effect take over the directing role of S.O.E., which would be reduced (if it continued to exist) to the status of a supply and transport agency.

Here at last was a claimant for the inheritance of S.O.E.: but not one likely to appeal to the military instincts of the Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Planners were briefed on their answer (1) largely by S.O.E., (2) and they took a firm line.They adhered to the view that 'An airborne invasion of Poland and Czechoslovakia is impossible. The transport of arms for the "secret armies' of those countries is not at present possible. Ever, if passible, it would not be justifiable at the expense of the bomber offensive, except on a small scale for diversionary activities by special groups'. They also accepted S.O.E.'s arguments against a 'Common Allied Staff': -

(a) It would be dominated by the Poles,
(b) It would be incapable of reaching agreement.
(c) It would-be hopelessly insecure.
(d) If it did reach agreement, it would be able to brinig undue pressure to bear on the Chiefs of Staff.

S.O.E. had reverted in its brief to the 'Fourth Arm' theory

(1) J.P.(42)465 of' 1st May 1942.

(2) J.P.(42)423 (S) of 19th April, and Brig. Gubbins's minute to the J.P.S. dated 22nd April 1942 - on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1 Part 2.

and, had suggested that all Allied governments should be formally notified of its. status. The J.P.S. (once more) evade this awkward issue,.but agree that it should be impressed on General Sikorski that 'S.O.E. acts as the coordinating authority charged with dealing with the General Staffs of the occupied territories'. The C. 0.S. accepted this, (1) along with the J.P.S.'s other recommendations, and the C. I.G.S. wrote to General Sikorski accordingly. It then became clear that it was essential that other Allied Governments should be similarly directed into one channel, that of S.O.E. and on 1st June the Chiefs of Staff agreed upon a letter to all the exiled Governments, to be despatched over the signature of Sir Alan Brooke as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee: (2) copies were sent to the Joint Staff Mission in Washington and to all Cs-in-C. abroad. (3)

This letter (4) (though in some cases the Allied Governments took care to forget its term) was an important landmark for S.O.E.: like the 'Foreign Office Treaty' it was in effect a new charter under the guise of an interpretation. Unlike the 'Treaty', it extended only to the occupied countries, but within that area it had far more reality and weight. It was clear that Resistance might have some day some military value: it was still clearer that it possessed already immense power to waste the time of the Chiefs of Staff and possibly some power tc endanger important strategic decisions. From the Chiefst of Staff point of view

(1) C.O.S.(42)137th Mtg. Minute 11 of 2nd May, and C.O.S.(42)141st Mtg.. Minute 5 of 6th May. See also C.O.S (42)142 (0) of 19th May and C.O.S.(42)159th Mtg. Minute 15 of 23rd May.

(2) C.O.S.(42)274 (Revise) of 21st May, and C.O.S.(42.)166th Mtg.. Minute 11 of Ist June.

(3) C.O.S.(42)178th Mtg. Minute 7 of 13th June, and C.O.S.(ME)No. 271 of 13 th June.

(4) Reproduced as Appendix F.

there must be some 'buffer state', to sooth the Allies, to disentangle their demands and so far as possible to align them with the main plans: S.O,E. was there in readiness for this role, and the role would inevitably give it great power, 'as the agent to whom the General Staffs should refer on all matters in connection with sabotage and the organisation of resistance and secret armies'.

The Foreign Office had been consulted and appear to have concurred. (1)

(v) The Invasion Directive, May 1942.

Therehad been some general discussion during April of S.O.E.'s part in, the attack on oil targets. (2) But this was not a field in which S.O.E. could contribute much as yet: and the main point of strategical interest is the drafting of a directive 'in order that action by S.O.E. should conform to the general plan for an offensive proposed by General Marshall'. (3)Home Forces were consulted, as they were then (with C.C.O.) primarily responsible for invasion planning, and they testified that their liaison with S.O.E. was already close: what -they wanted was what S.O.E. would find very difficult to give, 'rather more exact appreciations'of what could be expected from the general population. Home Forces also undertook to keep S.O.E. closely informed of 'the areas in which the action of patriot forces and sabotage can be most effective'. (4)

(1) Letter from Col. G.R. Price (C.O.S. Secretariat) to Mr. W. Strang, dated 3rd June 1942.Copy on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1 Part 2.

(2) C.0.S.(42)102(0), C.O.S.(42)113(0), C.O.S.(42)138th Mtg/. Item 7, and related papers refer.

(3) Secretary of J.P.S. to Brig. McNabb, G.H.Q. Home Forces, dated 21st April 1942. S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 'SC/76 U.S.A. 'has a section on 'S.O. and General Marshall' .

(4) B.G.S. (Plans) to Secretary of J,P.S., April 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/1 Part 2.

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The document wich resulted (1) was severely practical, Indeed Puritanical: i ts formal military phrasing contrasts oddly.with the human struggle and confusion which was S.O.E.'s standing army in the field. But it was full of meaning. It informed S.O.E. specifically of forthcoming operations, enumerated the authorities responsible, and enjoined continuous collaboration: S.O.E. had been accepted as a military authority with a clear place in the hierarchy. What is more, 'S.O.E. should endeavour to build up end equip para-military organisations in the area of the projected operations'. There is all the difference in the world between the languid concurrence in a trial of Secret armies, given in.August 1941: and the precise. directive to create them for one or more specific operations. This is not a plan: but it is in effect an instruction to go ahead and damn the political consequences, It is not known if the Foreign Office were consulted or concurred.

(c) The Service Departments

So much for higher strategy. The guidance given had not been very continuous nor always very clear: but liaison had been reasonably well maintained. On the whole, the same may be said as regards the individual service departments and organisations at home: as we have secn, the position in Middle East was more awkward. (2)

The War Office

Since July 1940, the War Office had never shown any anxiety to control of absorb S.O.E.: S.O.E. on the other hand had to some extent assimilated itself to the War Office. It had an office

(1) Reproduced as Appendix G. J.P.(42)479 of 6th May, and C.O.S.(42)133(0) of 12th May, approved by C.O.S.(42)147th Mtg. Item 5 of 11th May. Modified in detail by C.O.S.(42)231st Mtg. Min.2 of 5th August.

(2) Above p.253.

at the Horse Guards: its normal cover for doing business was that of M.O.1(S.P.), a War Office branch: it did not contain many regular soldiers, but most of its staff were in military uniform, and some of them had military experience. There was thus no great problem of 'War Office liaison', as a matter of external relations, and no centralised machinery for it was required. (1) It was a matter of effective collaboration through a large number of separate channels: personnel, ordnance, other stores, accommodation and so forth. Each of these presented a whole series of problems, (2) but they were too technical to be worth treating here.

Home Commands

Until the creation of 'Cossac' in March 1943, the main executive authorities concerned were G.H.Q. Home Forces, C.C.O. and the Airborne Division.. Home Forces were already beginning to consider the invasion problem, and were in touch with S.O.E.: the Airborne Division could usefully draw on S.O.E.'s experience and on the development work in progress at §tation IX. But neither of these was engaged in operations, and there was no need as yet for any formal definition of relations.

The position was rather different as regards C.C.O. (3) Formal liaison had ceased with the disappearance of the 'S.O. Board' in February 1941: there is a record of a detailed

(1) There was junior officer in the Liaison Section until summer 1945. (The AG Section is still in existence bi the S.O.E. Liquidation Section - August 1947).

(2) See S.O.E. Technical Histories - Part III Supplies for ordnance.

(3) There is a brief but useful narrative of ths by Miss Winifred Close.

exchange of projects in March 1941, (1) but little more emerges on the policy level until the appointment of Lord Louis Mountbatten as 'Advizer on Combined Operations' in October 1941. (2) From this time dates the real development of Combined Operations as a development organisation, whose operations all played some part in the growth of a new technique. Lord Louis Mountbatten could always be reckoned as one of S.O.E.'s ' friends' both in London (3) and later in South East Asia: and he did not hesitate to make full use of S.O.E.'s resources. The first liaison officer with Combined Operations Headquarters (Major D.A. Wyatt, R.E.) was appointed in December 1941, and it is pretty clear that he was useful to A.C.O. in putting at his disposal what had so far been achieved by the S.O.E. Technical Directorate.

S.O.E. a1so took', a very practical part in the active operations of the next few months. It supplied men and information for the Norwegian raids, probably somewhat to its own disadvantage. It contributed equipment and training both for the Bruneval raid of 27th/28th February 1942, and the St. Nazaire raid of 27th/28th March: in addition a Sudeten German was picked by S.O.E. for each of these operations, and two French officers accompanied the St. Nazaire raid, (4) Major Wyatt, the S.O.E. liaison officer, was killed in the Dieppe operation (17th August 1942), and his

(1) S.0.2 list dated 27th March 1941: D.C.O. list about same date. Both on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) SC/75. (In addition S.O.E. supplied an Italian - who was captured and executed - for the first regular parachute operation in Southern Italy in February 1941).

(2) Directive in C.O.S.(41)629 of 17th October.

(3) See for instance record of talk between Lord Louis Mountbatten and Mr. Dalton, 9th January 1942, on S.O.E. Archives Fil e (AD/S.1) SC/75.

(4) See detailed list of S.O.E.'s contributions to Combined Operations dated 16th April 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) SC/75.

post was left vacant for some months: by this time relations had become so close that direct contact was made between all the branches concerned on both sides, (1) and the need for f ormal machinery was less pressing.The C.O. liaison branch however remained in existence on a small scale as a central point of refereace up to the end of the war.

Admiralty S.O.E. had a tiny but far-flung Empire at sea, with bases in the Shetlaads, at Burghead, Leigh-on-Sea, Helford and Gibraltar, as well as in the Levant and the Red Sea: so that there was a substantial administrative problem involved, as well as a danger of operational conflicts.But fortunately S.O.E.'s various 'private navies' were never on a scale to disturb the Admiralty's feelings, either on a point of principle or through a serious clash of priorities. Relations with regular naval operations presented no serious difficulties: but there was always an uneasy feeling in S.O.E.’s mind that S.I.S. as the older organisation on the whole. got more consideration from the Navy than it deserved. (2) There was in addition the question of what assistance S.O.E. could give the Admiralty in, its strategic tasks: the attack on enemy shipping, the anti-submarine campaign, even the destruction of enemy capital ships. S.O.E. could never do so much for the Navy as it could for the Army; but it had something to offer which could not be neglected. (3)
S.O.E. had practically no Naval officers on its ordinary establishment: and the machinery for handling relations with the Admiralty was as a result always largely centralised in

(1) See Appendix "A’ to S.O.E. 'C.O.H.Q. Liaison History'.

(2) Cf. for instance the question of Brittany and the West coast of France above p. 356.

(3) See the brief but comprehensive list in Appendix A to S.O.E. 'Naval Section History'.

a special naval branch, vhich assumed various forms. At the outset Cdr, R.D, Watson, R..N., (who had been M.I.(R)'s representative in Roumania until September 1939) formed part of a special liaison section with Army and Air representatives. In May 1941 he fell ill andwas replraced by Rear Admiral L.S. Holbrook, who remained liaison officer until April 1942. A more direct solution was then adopted. The Naval Liaison Section. became the Navy Section of S.O.E. , under Capt.. H.A. Simpson, R.N.; it took over from Brig. Gubbins's Directorate the responsibility for all sea operations based on the United Kingdom, and was also in charge of S.O.E.'s naval administration - personnel, stores, technical liaison and so forth - except for the special problem of Norwegian personnel. This Section was in form part of the Directorate of Naval Intelligance, under the cover name of N.I.D. Q)- parallel to it was N.I.D.(C), in similar relations to S.I.S.

Finally, iii April 1943 the Section vas up-graded to the status of a Directorate, under Rear Admiral A.H. Taylor, who became Naval Director with a seat on the S.O.E. Council. Shortly afterwards N.I..D. (Q) and N.I.D, (C) were amalgamated under the Operations Division of the Admiralty an D.D.O. D.(I), which asserted Admiralty 'responsibility for clandestine operations by sea in a11 theatres': the Norwegians at.Lerwick and the 'Levant Fishing Patrol' were governed by separate local arrangements, but on the whole the Admiralty had reasserted its position. The 'private navy' had disappeared, and the Admiralty had accepted responsibility for a number of highly irregular commitments which it would certainly not have welcomed in 1940. Needless to say, they were efficiently discharged.

The Air Ministry

The R.A.F. presented much the most difficult problem. of co-operation.On the one hand, there wras comparatively little that S.O.E. could do to help the R.A.F. in its battle with the German Air Force. Various sabotage devices were invented such as bombs fused barometrically, which could be secreted in an aircraft so as to explode when it reached a given height; and there were projects for bigger things such as the attack on the crews of KG.100 at Vannes, or on the Foche-Wulfs at Mérignac. (1) But airfields in Western Europe were well guarded and did not make easy targets:there were one or two minor successes, but nothing very striking (2) - and certainly nothing such as the Long Range Desert Groups were able to achieve in North Africa. S.O.E. could of course (once its organisation was established) attack small industrial targets which were beyond reach of bombing: and it later proved pretty conclusively that more locomotives could be immobilised by the 'cheminots' than by the R.A.F,, with less loss of Allied life. But in 1942 this was largely speculative and in the future; and it as not at all easy to demonstrate to an unsympathetic Air Marshal that a ton of agents and equipment would achieve more than a ton of bombs.

On the other hand, S.O.E. very soon found that its own operations were impossible without the R.A.F., and that its requirements for air support were practically without limit. Everywhere (ex cept perhaps in Norway) the tempo was set by the number of aircraft which could be made available! S.O.E.

(1) Above p. 369.
(2) Except perhaps the attack on the Iraqi Air Force by Jews in April 1941, which apparently destroyed 16 aircraft.

was in fact controlled by the Air Ministry, and the Air Ministry had troubles enough on its hands without extending air operations to a new field. Furthermore, the operations involved were of a very awkward kind. An airman could see there were few people in S.O.E. who had any conception of the technical difficulties involved, and that it would be a miracle if S.O.E.'s agents in the field were not a great deal worse than their masters. Even a dropping operation was like trying to get home in the dark to an aerodrome controlled by irresponsible amateurs: and it was many times worse for landing operations. The aircrews concerned took fantastic risks with great coolness and skill: but it pressed awkwardl.- on their superiors that they should have to send men on such errands without some guarantee that reasonably 'airmanlike' precautions had been taken.

It is unnecessary to rehearse the various controversies about aircraft allocation and control which have already appeared almost everywhere even before the end of 1941. The amount of air support available can be summarised fairly briefly. No. 419 Flight was formed at North Weald in August 1940 with an establishment of two Lysanders. In October it moved to Stradishall and in February 1941 to Newmarket - it was then renamed No. 1419 Flight. By this time its establishmcnt had been increased (1) to three Whitleys, one Lysander and one Maryland: this to suffice for the needs both of S.I.S. and S.O.E.

In August 1941 came the first serious calculation of the air implications of S.O.E., (2) and the undertaking given by

(1) Cf. J.I.C.(41)63 of 8th February, 1941 C.O.S.(41)55th Mtg.. Item 1, of 14th February, Mr. Jebb to General Ismay of 22nd February, to D.C.A.S. (Air Marshal Harris) of 6th March, and D.C.A.S's reply of 10th March; Mr. Dalton to the Prime Minister of 6th March. C.S.S. to Mr. Jebb dated l0th March and the latters reply. Letters on S.O.E. Archives Files (AD/S.) '133' and F.112/3.

(2) Above p. 543.

C.A.S. to the Chiefs of Staff. The establishment of Whitleys in No. 1419 Flight was increased to six; and shortly afterwards it became No. 138 Squadron, with 8 Whitleys, 2 Halifaxes, and 1 Lysander. The Halifaxes were a special concession to the needs of Poland, and the squadron had on its establishment one Polish and one Czech crew.

The demand, for expansion continued throughout that winter and there was another substantial improvement early in 1942. No. 161 Squadron was formed in January, under Wing Commander Fielden, out of the King's Flight, with an establishment of four Whitleys, six Lysanders, two Wellingtons, and one Hudson., and in February the two squadrons were grouped together as No. 107 Wing and moved to Tempsford, near St. Neots, Hunzingdonshire, (1) which is the airfield mainly associated with air support to the Resistance in its critical time. The picture by this time was ;- (2)

No. 138 Squodron	4 Halifaxes
	12 Whitleys
No. 161 Squadron	6 Lysanders
	4 Witleys
	2 Wellingtons
	1 Hudson.

The main burden of S.O.E. work fell on No. 138 Souadron all landing operations were carried out by No. 161 Squadron's Lysanders, while its Whitleys were intended primarily for S.I.S. The other three aircraft were on special duties of a different kind.

No. 138 Squadron was now gradually re-equipping with Halifaxes, which meant a considerable improvement in range

(1) There is a short history of the R.A.F. Station at Tempsford - S.O.E. Archives 1/420/18. From April 1942 to May 1945, deliveries to the field nearly 29,000 Containers, over 1,100 Agents, nearly 10,000 packages - Tempsford History p. 2.

(2) Minute from Col. Barry to C.D. dated 1st February 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) ‘133’.

and load; but this process was not complete until the autumn of 1942.

This represented a small but effectively organised force based on the United Kingdom: development was slower in the Middle East. The first period of heavy pressure was in the autumn of 1941, when Mihailovitch came to the fore; there was much discussion and little progress, as there was almost a total lack of aircraft with sufficient range based on North Africa. A special flight was promised (1) and did not materialise: two Whitleys were given and proved too slow to reach Mihailovitch during the hours of darkness: two Wellesleys were given and proved useless; four 'Whitleys were flown out from England and three of them were destroyed on the ground at Malta. Liberators were the only real hope: and there were only three Liberators with the necessary modifications in Middle East. No more could be provided except at the expense of Coastal Command. lt was not until October 1941 (2) that a real ‘Special Duty’ flight was organised in Egypt, and it was then equipped with only two Whitleys from 138 Squadron. We have seen what this meant to Mihailovitch and to Captain Hudson. (3)

In spite of these prevailing shortages, a good deal of progress was made in these two years in creating an efficient organisation in the United Kingdom, on the 'working levels' . The full procedure for a single operation in its final form (4) involved twenty-three stages and seven different authorities.

(1) C.O.S.(41)339th Mtg. Item 2, of 1st October.

(2) From 'Summary of Position regarding, provision of Aircraft for S.O.E. Cairo and Malta’ dated 1st November 1941.Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/68.14.

(3) Above p. 185.

(4) As set out in S/Ldr. Braithwaite’s excellent paper on 'Air Operations - S.O.E.', dated 13th November 1945. Copy with S.O.E. histories.

so that there are technical complexities which cannot be unravelled here. The original picture was that (under Brig. Gubbins as Director of Operations) Lt. Col. Barry was responsible for ‘laying on' all air operations. To him came all Country Sections with demands for operations: he in turn went to the Air Ministry through the Air Liaison Section, which was also A.I.10 in the Air Ministry Directorate of Intelligence. Through one of his branches (A.1.2(c)) the Director of Intelligence checked the projected operation against all known information of the terrain and the enemy's dispositions, and decided whether it was possible; through another (its title varied at different times) he exercised detailed operational control of the S.D. Squadrons. These Squadrons came for administration at first under No. 11 Group, Fighter Command: later under No. 3 Group, Bomber Command, but it was not until August 1943 that operational control was devolved by the Air Ministry to Bomber Command. (1)

This organisation grew in complexity both on the side of S.O.E. and on that of the Air Ministry. Ultimately there was a ‘Conference Room' in Norgeby House where a detailed War Room of operations was maintained: there were a Pin-Pointing Section, a Q. Section, and a Radio Section within S.O.E.’s air operations organisation: in the country there was a vast packing station at Gaynes Hall, St. Neots, (2) where there was also a 'hotel' for agents awaiting transport: there was a parachute section under R.A.F. charge at Henlow: (3)

(1) C.O.S.(43)491 (0) of 25th August, Annex I.

(2) Packing became so vast that in October 1943 an outside firm of packers (Messrs. Carpet Trades Ltd. Kidderminster) were employed to pack 'standard loads', so that a reserve supply was built up for the 1944 deliveries. for example in 1941 95 containers were packed - in 194 56,464.

(3) See S.O.E. ‘Air Liaison History' - S.D. Parachute Section, by F/Lt. Bunn.

there were special courses for agents in the organisation of air landing operations and in the use of Rebecca/Eureka. The main lines of the Organisation however remained quite constant: all demands for operations were centralised in one section of S.O.E., and the final discretion as to the conduct of operations rested with the R.A.F. and not with S.O.E. These are fixed points on which any future organisation would necessarily be based.

Relations on a higher level were not so happy. S.O.E. felt that this was in part due to the R.A.F's lack of knowledge of the purposes of S.O.E. and of confidence in its internal organisation: and it was anxious to draw the R.A.F. into a fuller share of responsibility. On the R.A.F. side the difficulty was to find the men: an office job could not be expected to be popular with regular officers in such a period of R.A.F. expansion. The first experiment (1) was the appointment of Group Captain Grierson to Brig. Gubbins's staff in April 1942, to take a full part in the organisation as Director of the Operations Section, with other responsibilities besides those for air operations. Day-to-day efficiency continued to improve under this regime: but it proved to be no answer to the problem of improved mutual comprehension. (2) S.O.E. and its ways were still a somewhat tedious mystery to most responsible officers of the R.A.F., and in particular to the A.O.C.-in-C. Bomber Command.

(1) Originally reposed by Sir Frank Nelson: letter to A.C.A.S.(1) dated 30th January 1942, to Air Vice-Marshal Medhurst on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) '133' Cf. also Minute from Brig. Gubbins to C.D. dated 24th February 1942 recording a meeting with D.C.A.S. on the whole problem.

(2) There vas a proposal in May 1942 that Air commodore L.G.S. Payne, then a Director in S.I.S., should act As 'high-level' liaison officer. This was turned Down by S.O.E. Papers on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1)'133'.

(b) RUSSIA (1)

The Russian story is very different, and illustrates once again the type of difficulty which hampered our dealings with the U.S.S.R. in all fields. With the Americans there was quarrelsome but intimate and lively co-operation. With the Russians every attempt was made to initiate co-operation on formal terms, but formality never developed into practical cohesion in pursuit of a common object. In this the fault was by no means entirely on the Russian side.

First Contacts.

The idea of active co-operation with the Russians in subversion seems to have originated (2) with Sir Stafford Cripps, who went to Moscow as Ambassador in June 1940: and tehe first thought was of indirect contact, possibly through the Czechs, who were always careful to maintain intimate relations with Moscow. This was not pursued, but direct contact was opened towards the end of July by the dispatch of Lt. Col. Guinness to Moscow for discussions with the N.K.V.D. This organisation, it should be explained, was the only one among the Allies (or among the enemy for that matter) which approached the theoretical conception of an all-embracing service dealing with all subversion and also with all ‘black' activities of whatever kind.
It embraced within itself all the activities dispersed among various secret or semi-secret organisations in Great Britain M.I.5, the 'Special Branch', S.O.E., S.I.S., P.W.E.: it also had pretty large general responsibility for propaganda, internal and external: and (like Himmler's organisation) it tended in some senses to become a State within a State. In

(1) There is a useful History of the Russian Section by Major McLaughlin.

(2) Mr. Dalton's Minute No. 30 of 25th June 1941 - copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F.85/5.

relation to this body S.O.E. was a junior organisation dealing with one which had great power and endless ramifications outside S.O.E's sphere; the direct contacts which S.O.E. possessed were only with one corner of N.K.V.D. - the internal reactions of that organisation as a whole remained mysterious to the end.

Colonel Guinness naturally was not sent without the con-

The 'Moscow Treaty' September 1941.

currcnce of the Foreign Office and the Embassy.Unfortunately his Report has not been found, so that there is no material available on the course of the negotiations, which resulted in a full draft agreement early in September.This was brought to England by Colonel Guinness early in September, and was sent to Sir Orme Sargent at the Foreign Office for his information. (1) Colonel Guinness then returned to Moscow, where the Agreement was signed on 30th September by him and by General Nikolaev for N.K.V.D. (2)

The agreement itself provides fully and explicitly for co-operation between the Allies in subversive action in all countries,outside the U.S.S.R. on the one hand and the British Commonwealth on the other; and it is accompanied by a survey of objectives indicating the type of target to be attacked by sabotage in the main areas concerned. 'Co-operation' (in subversive activities) 'is not only desirable and practicable, but essential for our common aims in defeating.- the enemy' 'Co-operation in all other countries ... will be decided by the Heads of the British and Soviet organisations and will be based on a common policy. Such a common policy includes:

(1) Letter of Mr. Jebb of 17th September on S.O.E. Archives File F.85/5. This is worth noting, as the Report and Agreement were returned to S.O.E. on 8th October (Sir Orme Surgent's letter of that date) and in later discussions the Foreign Office denied having seen ana approved the document (Sir Alexander Cadogan's letter of 10th February 1942).

(2) Text at Appendix I of S.O.E. Russian Section History.

(a) The co-ordination of sabotage activities and the allocation of targets.

(b) The co-ordination of propaganda intended to incite the local population to insurrection, active sabotage and other subversive activities.

(c) The timing of any particular operation, especially where it affects the political or operational plans of the other party.'

Liaison missions, would be exchanged between S.O.E. and N.K.V.D.: each country would 'give all possible assistance in introducing each other's agents into occupied territory';
each 'would consider the possibility of permitting the establishment in their own territories of the other party's W/T terminals'.

The exchange of Missions.

In fact, the agreement was more precise and far-reaching than that arrived at with O.S.S. almost a year later, and much of it was formally fulfilled. Missions were exchanged, under Colonel Hill in Moscow and Colonel Chichaev in London, and they were in fairly frequent contact with the organisations to which they were accredited. It is not known what was the real status of the supposed 'high contacts' on the Russian side: on the British side two different individuals were successively 'passed off' as C.D., the head of the organisation. information on technical devices was exchanged: but only on those already commonplace and in regular use. Plans were begun for liaison with N.K.V.D. in other theatres - the Middle East, Persia, the Far East and

China in particular - but nothing ever came of them. It was however an item to the Soviet credit that they put at the disposal of the Government of India a certain Bhagat Ram, an agent working; for the Germans on Russian orders in Afghanistan: he proved to be of considerable value, and the Russians had a reasonable complaint that they got no adequate quid Pro quo from the British as regards intelligence in Central Asia.

'Pickaxe' S.O.E's counter-claim would have been that there was a more than adequate quid pro quo in the 'Pickaxe' parties which they transported for the Russians to Western Europe. No similar facilities were ever given by the Russians in the East, although they permitted the dropping of one British agent in Estonia (1) and seem to have done a certain amount to trace and to extricate British parties in the territories which they overran. But the Russians would certainly not have admitted that the British handling of the 'Pickaxe' parties was such as to call for gratitude.

To strike a balance on this matter (which was of some substantial importance in Anglo-Soviet relations) one would need to know (as we do not) how seriously the Russians regarded 'Pickaxe': was it a real part of their plans or merely an attempt to test British good faith? It would also be necessary to penetrate the fog of wrangling which surrounded almost every one of the parties. The statistics of the story can be put fairly shortly:

(1) His mission was an abject failure. Operation 'Blunderhead' - see Section V of' S.O.E. History of Polish Minorities Section.

SECRET

6M.

1942

For France	One agent by sea	Two months delay in U.K.
do.	Three agents by air	One month delay in U.K.

For Belgium One killed in a crash; one delivered to Holland after twelve months delay.

For Holland Two: one dropped with wrong luggage by S.O.E's error, of which the N.K.V.D. became aware. One month's delay.

For Austria Four who 'mutinied' and attempted to escape from N.K.V.D. with S.O.E's connivance.
Two dispatched in an aircraft which failed to return. Two month's delay.

1943

For Germany	Two dropped	Five months delay
do.	One dropped	Four months delay
For Austria	Two dropped	Five months delay
For France	One dropped	One months delay
	Three dropped	Two-four months delay.

For North Italy One landed after much delay and recrimination.

1944

For Austria	One dropped	Little delay
For Germany	One dropped	Four months delay
	Two dropped	Two months delay

For France Three dropped after a good deal of recrimination.

The total was 34 'Pickaxe' agents of whom 25 went to the field, three were killed in aircraft lost and six were abortive. From S.O.E's side this was technically not too bad. The housing and care of the agents was very troublesome: their false papers and cover stories were often poorly organised by the N.K.V.D. and had to be provided

afresh by S.O.E., the delays were in no way beyond comparison with those which S.O.E's own agents endured through lack of transport facilities. But N.K.V.D. could hardly be expected to admit its own technical deficiencies or to sympathise with S.O.E's transport problems: if it wanted evidence of doublecrossing or at least 'administrative delays', it could find it fairly easily in the record.

It would certainly have been encouraged to do so if it had known the political history of the matter on the British side. The Foreign Office (though it is pretty certain that it had the papers at the time) was clearly unconscious of the implications of the 'Moscow Agreement' until it was faced early in 1942 with the first specific Russian request for the delivery of an agent to France. (1) It was then (not unnaturally) startled by the implications of delivering Russian agents to the territories of countries whose 'Free' governments were in most cases rabidly anti-Communist: and the debate which ensued occupied most of 1942. S.O.E. (supported on the whole by H.M. Ambassador in Moscow) represented that the Russians would inevitably regard the matter as a test case, just because it waspolitically so delicate, and that no growth of easy co-operation could be expected unless we met reasonable Russian requirements promptly and efficiently. The Foreign Office maintained its reluctance to permit the dropping of agents whose true tasks were unknown to us without the consent of the Governments concerned: it also showed some disposition to bargain (e.g. for an improvement of the Russian attitude to Mihailovitch) about the fulfilment of an obligation which we had plainly accepted in the 'Mioscow Agreement'.

(1) Mr. Loxley to Col. Taylor on 5th January 1942 - copy on S.O.E. Archives File AD/S.1) F.85/5.

The final upshot was a letter from Sir Charles Hambro to Sir Alexander Cadogan in December 1942, (1) confirming agreement reachod verbally -

(a) Agents to be introduced freely into all countries fighting with the Axis.

(b) Agents not to be introduced into occupied Allied countries without consulting the Government concerned.

(c) Agents not normally to be introduced into occupied France without consulting the Free French: but exceptions to be possible.

(d) Agents not normally to be introduced into neutral countries.

This was confirmed and made slightly more stringent in Sir Alexanderls acknowledgement. (2)

This was of course a one-sided abrogation of the Agreement. But there is no reason to believe it was known to the Russians, and it had already become pretty clear that there was not to be a gradual growth of friendly collaboration. This was a phenomenon to be observed in other departments of Anglo-Russian relations in the same period, and it must not be referred only to the local difficulties in S.O.E's sphere. From this time onward are to be found regular representations from Brig. Hill about the futility of his work in Moscow, and the S.O.E. mission was retained there mainly because it was convenient in minor ways to the Ambassador and the Military Mission. Brig. Hill

(1) Letter of 2nd I)ecember - copy in S.O.E. Archives File (C.D.) 'Russia/3'.

(2) Letter of 11th December - copy in S.O.E. Archives File (C.D.) 'Russia/3'.

was for instance given excellent conducted tours in the Leningrad area and in White Russia in 1944, when other British officers were much less freely received: and he had some opportunities for meeting unofficial Russians, as no guard was placed outside his flat. He was thus able to produce some interesting general appreciations of the Russian attitude: but relations on the N.K.V.D. front were a matter of dinner-partics and deadlocks.

Other Russian Complaints.

A few of these troubles are worth referring to as specimens. In Yugoslavia there was first the complaint that the British had refused on grounds of impracticability to send a Russian party to Tito in 1943, and had then sent a party themselves without prior consultation in April 1943.Then in 1944 a Russian officer was put in to maintain liaison with Brig. Maclean's mission and had to be withdrawn after a brief stay on grounds of incompatibility of temperament. In Greece a Russian party succeeded in getting itself dropned to E.L.A.S. in July 1944 by a curious and rather childish stratagem, and there was trouble about British liaison officers' relations with escaped Russian prisoners .In Rumania it was a serious grievance that Colonel de Chastelain was dropped in uniform in December 1943 without prior Russian knowledge was he intended to intrigue against Russia with reactionary Rumanians? In the West the worst dispute (1) was over British attempts to find some means of exploiting the large number of Russians fighting in German uniform., a military factor of very serious importance. They had been pressed into German service by the most brutal methods; and were hold to it by the conviction that they could

(1) See S.O.E. File (C.D.) 'Russia/4' for the full story.

expect nothing from the Allies but execution as traitors. This was a grave matter of high policy which had many aspects: S.O.E's share in it was to segregate and train some Russian prisoners with a view to their use as agents. This was done after no more than a general intimation of the plan to N.K.V.D., and when the action taken was admitted there followed a great storm and an absolute refusal to co-operate. The whole scheme had therefore to be dropped.

By this time the Russians on their side had abandoned the 'Pickaxe'l programme entirely, and in 1944 and 1945 there was little ground of co-operation left. The idea was broached once or twice of negotiating a new agreement for collaboration against a Nazi revival: but it was not pursued very seriously on either side, and the S.O.E. mission was finally withdrawn from Moscow in September 1945

It had been a failure, but not for reasons within S.O.E's control.

(d) Propaganda

We have already traced the story of S.O.E's relations with the Ministry of Information up to September 1941, when the original conception of unified subversion broke down. The narrative of operations has illustrated at almost every turn what this meant.

De Gaulle's position rested in part on agents maintained in the field by S.O.E. and on S.O.E's money, arms and wireless transmitters: but in the first stages it probably meant more to his success to have at his disposal open broadcasting facilities on the B.B.C. and it was equally important to him to have access to a secret station sponsored by P.W.E. The attitude towards him adopted in the B.B.C's own transmissions and other direct British propaganda was also important, though not always in the sense which its authors intended. The same situation reproduced itself everywhere in Europe; in relations between Mihailovitch and the Partisans, between King George of Greece and E.A.M., between the Right and the Left in the smaller countries of the West. In order to grow and fight the Resistance needed a voice as well as weapons, and these two necessities of life could not be handled in isolation. (1)

Unfortunately they were so handled, and it is not possible in this narrative to present a complete story of subversive policy or even of the relations between the 'subversive' departments. '.Is must be content to trace briefly S.O.E's owni position up to the late summer of 1942.

(1) As Lord Selborne wrote to Sir Orme Sargent in another context on 16th April 1943:- 'If my officers say one thing to the Greeks and Yugoslavs and the B.B.C. say something quite contrary, they will be liable to have their throats cut, and that is a responsibility that rests on your shoulders as well as on mine'.

M. of I.

In its own person the Ministry of Information continued to overlap with S.O.E. only in regard to the United States of America, Russia, the Far East, the Arab World, South America and the unoccupied countries of Europe. Each of these presented serious problems, but the urgency of the need was much less great than in the territory of the Political Warfare Executive, where every move was a matter of immediate life and death for someone. The Far East is of course a vast subject in itself: but the other territories mentioned did not afford very serious room for friction, and the problem of co-operation proved perfectly tractable except at periods when the Ministers were in personal disagreement. The Arab World was part of the general confusion of responsibilities in the'Middle East, but it was not an area in which S.O.E. was operating very actively: (1) in the other areas all that was needed was a working liaison between the hcads of Sections concerned, and the provision of liaison officers for any minor matters which did not fit the existing arrangement. This position was reached fairly satisfactorily by

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the summer of 1942, when a memorandum (1) was drawn up setting out the General principles to be followed and the detailed arrangements for each area. The essence of this was that S.O.E. would not indulge in ‘subversive’ activities in the Ministry of Information area unless asked to do so by the Foreign Office or by the 1ocal Commander-in-Chief: and that if these activities involved propaganda of any kind the Ministry of Information should be generally informed of their scope. S.O.E. would not disseminate open propaganda at all except at the Specific request of the Ministry of Information: but it would be the normal channel of ‘unacknowledgeable' propaganda, unless the Ministry of Information wished in some area to break into this field themselves. Finally, S.O.E. representatives would not involve the local Ministry of Information officials in any activities which could not be reported to the Ministry and duly authorised by them. (2)

This agreement might not have stood, the test if S.O.E. had ever become involved in ‘unacknowledgeable’

(1) Formarded to Lord Selborne by Mr. Bracken on 2nd June 1942: Lord Selborne’s reply dated 9th June is on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 152 'Liaison with M. of I.' The Memo. was returned with slight amendments by Mr. Sporborg to Mr. Grubb on 10th June, confirmed in Mr. Grubb's letter of 2nd July and Mr. Sporborg's of 28th july: all on same Me ' 152’ .
Earlier papers, which refer are draft 'Notes on Co-operation between M. of I. and S.O.E.’ prepared by Mr. Jebb on 9th October 1941 and put aside by Mr. Dalton with the note 'These points can be usefully raised if we ever succeed in getting a sensible discussion with M. of I. on ‘ministerial level' - or with 'Ministerial approval on official plane’: (S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 Vol.I – P.W.E.) and draft 'Treaty' with M. of I. submitted by Mr. Jebb to Lord Selborne on 31st Harch 1942 (on same file).
See also note for C.D. by Mr. Sheridan on liaison arrangements as they existed at 19tb June 1942 (on same file).

(2) The last section of this 'Charter' is printed as Appendix H. (para. 9(a) - (f)) .

propaganda on a serious scale in the areas concerned: (1) but the scheme proposed is a relatively intelligible one.The Foreign Office and the 'military' in concert call for a campaign to further some specific end: 'open' propaganda is handled by the Ministry of Information, 'secret' by S.O.E. This was one possible theory of the 'decentralisation' of subversion: and its practicability was certainly not disproved by this experiment.

P.W.E. Unfortinately the Minister of Information was also the principle begetter of the Political Warfare Executive, which was based on the opposite principle of the unity of propaganda in war zones. There were in a sense three levels: the Foreign Office in concert with the Chiefs of Staff responsible for the general lines of policy; the Political Warfare Executive responsible for working out policy in more detail so far as it affected the German 'Empire' ; Special Operations Executive responsible for the execution of P.W.E's directives anywhere outside the United Kingdom. Each of these levels had it own Minister, with independent access to the 'highest quarters'.

This was clearly an unstable arrangement,yet S.O.E's part in the scheme was vital so far as it affected the despatch of agents into territory held by the enemy. There were already too many British 'travel bureaux' concerned in that field, and any conflict between their arrangements was a source of great and immediate danger. P.W.E. thus accepted fairly readily S.O.E's operational control of its agents in the field: we have seen that men of this type

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were going into Belgium and France by the summer of 1942. (1) When it came to work in the field, they were in every respect as other agents, except that their directives gave primary emphasis to special taskst in particular to assessment of public opinion and support of the underground Press. These men were ‘graduates’ of S.O.E’s ordinary schools, but had generally also been given special training in what was usually called the 'Hackett School' after Major Hackett its first commandant. This was established first at Beaulieu under the Political Warfare Executive, then in October 1941 a new school incorporating the old staff (who were known as S.T.P.) was opened at Pertenhall, twenty-five miles from the country headquarters of P.W.E. In May 1942 the school moved for a second time to premises within six miles of the P.W.E. country headquarters. In the spring of 1943 it was brought into line with other S.O.E. establishments, and transferred to Wall Hall, Aldenham, as S.T.S. 39, under the control of S.O.E. It continued to operate until May 1944, and handled some 200 pupils in all. The Political Warfare Executive continued to be intimately concerned with the training given.

But the case was not so strong for what may be called 'base areas' overseas, of which the most important were Gibraltar, West Africa, Middle East, and the U.S.A. (2) No logic could exclude from these areas the principle Of unity of propaganda which had been adopted in Great britain: if the Political Warfare Executive was to be a true ‘specialist'

(1) Above p. 343-343 and 457.

(2) There was also a minor difficulty about the despatch of Miss Wiskemann by P.W.E. to Switzerland in September 1941. S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.l) F.48/3(c): also Garnett's P.W.E. History Vol-II, pp. 125-129.

service, only very strong practical objections could prevent it from sending its own specialists to discharge its functions overseas. Unfortunately there already existed in each of these areas missions based on the alternative principle of the 'unity of subversion': and their interests had been reserved when Mr. Dalton gave his agreement to the formation of the Political Warfare Executive. In Britain P.W.E. had come into being in order to unite discordant organisations: in the overseas theatres it could only begin to operate by breaking up what was already united and in working order.

West Africa and the United States of America both gave rise to serious disputes, and there were grave doubts as to the wisdom of the decisions taken. In the U.S.A. Mr. David Bowes-Lyon arrived in July 1942 to take over a substantial part of Sir William Stephenson's Organisation: (1) the P.W.E. mission in West Africa was much delayed, and did not begin work until December 1942, when it was much too late to be of any practical value in attacking Vichy territory. (2) The Gibraltar case was also difficult, since P.W.E. at once proposed to establish their own team of propaEandists in the congested confines of the Rock, (3) and to set up a broadcasting station.This was settled in June 1942, by the constitution of a joint P.W.E./S.O.E. Mission: but P.W.E's broadcasting arrangements fell through, and their part of the team was withdrawm in September 1942.

(1) Garnett 'History of P.W.E.' p.120. As regards P.W.E.'s mission to Switzerland (Miss E. Wiskemann) see: Garnett p. 125-

(2) Garnett 'History of P.W.E.' p. 130 sqq.

(3) Correspondence retarding this on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/71.8a, 'P.W.E. Gibraltarl', and Garnett 'History of P.W.E.' p. 127 sqq.

The problem of the Middle East remained to trouble the waters for many months to come. In September 1941 Mr. Dalton had only recently succeeded in imposing a unified solution on the original chaos of S.O.E. Middle East, (1) and it would be administrative madness to disturb the new organisation so soon. In addition, the Balkans were already envisaged as an area of open guerilla warfare, (2) and there was every reason to maintain unity of control over agents in the field and the 'secret' broadcasting stations which purported to be working with them. Many of the broadcasters were natives of the occupied states who had been brought out earlier in 1941 by S.O.E's field representatives, as they withdrew in front of the Germans: and these S.O.E. representatives were many of them still present and active in the Cairo organisation.

For these reasons there jas not at first a frontal attack on S.O.E's position in the Middle East: the question was of fundamental importance, but not yet quite ripe for practical solution, and the disputes by which the Ministerial Committee was wrecked seem to have turned rather on general propaganda policy, for which Mr. Dalton still bore a share of responsibility, although the propagandists of the old S.0.1 had virtually passed out of his control.

We need not here consider the line suggested in his formal paper of 6th December 1941 'suggested particularly by the recent Conference of the I.L.O. in the United States, at which the Lord Privy Seal' (Mr. Attlee) 'represented His Majesty's Government, and by the evidence, which steadily

(1) Mr. Maxwell had been sent out in August 1941, above p. 267: see also Mr. Dalton's letter of 22nd September 1941 to Mr. Eden, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 – Vol. 1.

(2) The first news of Mihailovitch almost coincided with these events.

increases, that it is the working class, and especially the industrial working class, which are our best allies in the occupied territories, and our best prospective allies in the enemy countries themselves.1 (1) It is however important that on 9th December Mr. Dalton handed to Mr. Attlee a memorandum (2) in which he sharply retorted on Mr. Bracken's view 'that S.O.E. should not have anything to do with any kind of propaganda whatever': in his own view Mr. Dalton had not abandoned S.O.E's special interest in subversive propaganda, but had put it into a common stock to which the Minister of Information had merely contributed one vital element, his control of the B.B.C.

On 30th December, while Mr. Attlee was acting as Prime Minister in the absence of Mr. Churchill in Washington, Mr. Dalton took matters a stage further by forwarding to him a 'Proposal for a Ministry of Economic and Political Warfare' (3) -

'Let there be a clear-cut line between the responsibilities of the Minister of Information and ayself. Let him have charge of all 7ablicity an". T)rona~;anda for the Home Front: for the British Empire, both Dominions and Colonies and India; for the Americas, both U.S.A. and Latin America: for the U.S.S.R. and such other neutrals as may still be left. This, together with the Censorship, should surely be a full-time job. Let me, on the other hand, have charge of all propaganda directed towards enemy and enemy-occupied territories (the present Middle-East set-up can, I suggest, be left as it is, under Lyttleton and Monckton).' I should then become in effect

(1) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) '131 P.W.E.' Vol. 1.
(2) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) '131 P.W.E.' Vol. 1.
(3) Copy on S.O.E. Archives-File (AD/S.1) '131 P.W.E.' Vol. 1.

Minister for Political as well as for Economic Warfare, and my Department might be renamed accordingly. I should then be able to simplify and improve many of the present arrangements. On the one hand Political Warfare could be closely welded in with S.O.E., and on the other the Intelligence could be closely co-ordinated'. This is sound sense, and Mr. Dalton could quote Mr. Duff Cooper as a reluctant convert to the logic of the position: (1) but Mr. Bracken was of sterner metal than Mr. Cooper and it was clear that only a political tug-of-war could decide whether Mr. Bracken or Mr. Dalton should be ejected from the Ministerial Committee controlling the Political Warfare Executive. (2)

This found its issue on 22nd February in the promotion of Mr. Dalton to the Presidency of the Board of Trade and the appointment of Lord Selborne as Minister of Economic Warfare without a share in responsibility for the Political Warfare Executive. The change was publicly announced in a Parliamentary answer on 18th March, 'The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will continue to be responsible for policy, but the Minister of Information will be solely responsible for administration of the Political Warfare Executive. All forms of propaganda will thus be brought under the administrative control of a single Minister'. This text had been submitted to the Prime Minister for

(1) Letters to Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden dated 7th January 1942, enclosing copies of Mr. Duff Cooper's letter of 6th June 1941. S.O.E. Archives File 131 Vol. 1. (AD/S.1).

(2) The S.O.E. papers throw very little light on the details of this. On 3rd February Mr. Jebb briefed the Minister on the impending attack (copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131): and on 4th February Mr. Eden wrote to Mr. Dalton and negotiations for the Foreign Office Treaty were opened.

approval by Mr. Eden on 13th March, after agreement with Lord Selborne, who had insisted only that close liaison must be maintained with S.O.E. 'I do not think it is possible for S.O.E. to function at all if it is dissociated from all work connected with secret subversive propaganda. If you will visualise the position of any agent we send to enemy occupied territory, it will be clear that he can only function by gathering a band of like-minded inhabitants around him, and his procedure in so doing could not be described otherwise than "secret subversive propaganda"'. (1) This one vital reservation was again hammered home in letters from Mr. Jebb to Mr. Bruce-Lockhart on 23rd March, and from the Minister to Mr. Bracken on 25th March. (2)

There is no doubt that the tension was almost at once relaxed by this change. Personal relations between the three Ministers concerned were now excellent, and their staffs on working levels were in the main perfectly ready to collaborate. Formal liaison arrangements had been suggested when the Political Warfare Executive was formed: Mr. David Bowes-Lyon was appointed principal P.W.E. Liaison Officer, with free access to Baker Street, (3) and liaison meetings took place on 7th and 28th October with Sir Charles Hambro in the chair. (4) By February 1942 these occasional meetings had given birth to a 'Planning Committee' 'to examine and report to what extent operational propaganda, with particular reference to instruction in sabotage, can be made use of in open broadcasting', (5) this

(l) Letter of 5th March, copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 - Vol. 1.
(2) Both related to the P.W.E. 'Re-organisation Memo' of 20th March:i all on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 - Vol.1
(3) Mr. Jebb's Minute to Mr. Dalton of 15th September, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1)131 - Vol. 1.
(4) Minutes on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 - Vo1.1.
(5) Minutes of Mr. Bruce-Lockhart's meeting of 16th February, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.l) 'P.W.E. Vol . 1'. This problem had already arisen over 'Col. Britten's' V-campaign in 1941: Garnett 'History of P.W.E.' p. 87 sqq.

Committee apparently did not meet until 24th April, when Mr. David Garnett presided over representatives of the three service departments as well as of M.E.W. and S.O.E. (1) The Committee was re-organised in June on a higher level with Mr. Ivone Kirkpatrick (the Foreign Office representative at the B.B.C.) in the chair and without the Service departmentsand it was responsible for the launching of a general 'operational propaganda' campaign which was approved. by the Chiefs of Staff ' provided that it does not endanger either the formation of Secret Armies and the general uprising of patriots, or sabotage connected with actual operations'. (2) The story of this first 'phased' campaign, which was directed primarily against transport, belongs to the history of P.W.E.; the verdict recorded in S.O.E's papers is that in its first phases it was astonishingly effective, but that it proved politically impracticable to follow the 'hard' line of specific incitement to sabotage, which the later stages of the plan required - the risks of violent repression by mass reprisals could not be taken. (3) However this may be, such collaboration brought the two departments into contact in quite a new way, and by March 1943 Sir Charles Hambro was able to write most warmly to Lord Glenconner in the Middle East about the excellent practical working of the agreed division of responsibility. (4) Indeed during the winter of 1942-43

(1) Minutes on S.O.E. Archives File 1/270/3. See also Committee's first paper P.W.(Op.)(42)1 of 20th April, on same file.

(2) P.W.(Op.) (42)3 quoted in Sir Charles Hambro's letter to Mr. Bruce-Lockhart of 12th June 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File 1/270/3. The C.O.S. reference cannot be traced; presumably approval was given informally.

(3) Mr. Sporborg and Mr. Robin Brook were S.O.E's representatives. See Mr. Brook's reports to C.D. of 7th September and 16th October (among others) on S.O.E. Archives File 1/270/3.

(4) Various letters and telegrams in S.O.E. Archivos File (AD/S.1) 68/4.

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matters had gone so far that two departments were new tending to pull together against the restraining hand of the Foreign office.

In this atmosphere formal liaison had a chance to work, and it expressed itself on three levels (1)

(a) A P.W.E./S.O.E. Policy Committee, which began in February 1942 and met in general fortnightly on the 'highest official level' (2)
(b) Direct liaison between heads of Regions and Country Sections, and frequent meetings, either regular or ad hoc.
(c) A ‘low-level’ liaison officer, for minor practical matters, in the branch ‘D/Q’, which was responsible also for liaison with the Ministry of Information in its other aspect.

Disagreements were still inevitable in so complex a field, but they no longer tended to become deadlocks.

The practical problem was thus largely in process of solution in London: it remained to find some formal expression of it, and to apply the solution to the much more intractable question of the Middle East. (3) These two things were intimately connected. We have seen (4) the establishment of Mr. Maxwell as S.O.E’s Controller in Cairo, in circumstances which caused great bitterness in the Political Warfare Executive: the creation of his Directorate of Special Propaganda under Mr. Euan Butler; the formation of the Jerusalem Bureau, and the final agreement to their demand for a 'high-level co-ordinator’ of propaganda from Cairo. Sir Walter Monckton arrived in Middle East in this capacity in the autumn of 1941. A somewhat

(1) This is in part set out in Sir Charles Hambro's letter to Mr. Bruce-Lockhart of 12th June 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File 1/270/3.

(2) Minutes in S.O.E. Archives File 1/270/3.1

(3) For the P.W.E. side of this story see Garnett's History of P.W.E. p.136.

(4) Above p. 267-

acrimonious dispute was already in progress in London between the Foreign Office, the Political Warfare Executive and S.O.E. as to responsibility for the backwardness of propaganda plans to support the offensive of November 1941 in North Africa; (1) and this was not at first eased by the Minister of State's telegram (2) of 3rd December, reporting; the recommentdations of a Committee which had met under Sir Walter Monckton to 'survey all machinery for publicity radiating from Cairo'. This did not in fact involve any change in S.O.E's position: but no copy was cent to Mr. Dalton and his first instinct was to protest sharply. (3) Mr. Maxwell however made it clear that he had concurred in Sir 'Jalter Honcktonts recor.m endat ions throughout and indicated that there was no cause for alarm. (4)

Meantime in London 'plans for political warfare' were being produced by P.W.E., in more or less close touch with S.O.E., but not without recriminations as to the scope of P.W.E's authority: and the next stage is marked by Mr. Maxwell' s visit to London in January 1942. A meeting at which he was present was held at the Foreign 0ffice on 23rd January, and a formula was reached between P.W.E. and S.O.E. the essential parts of this read as follows- (5)

(1) Mr. Dalton to Mr. Eden, two letters dated 18th November 1941. replies from Mr. Eden 19th, 20th and 27th November 1941 - copies on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.

(2) No. 3806 of 3rd December 1941 - on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.

(3) No. 138 of 6th December 1941 to Mr. Maxwell - S.O.E. Archives File (AD/3.1) 66/4 Part 1.

(4) No. 133 Alpha of 7th December to Col. Taylor S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.

(5) Copy of revised Minutes dated 1st February 1942, S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.

'P.W.E. will lay down policy from time to time, wich they will communicate to Sir Walter Monckton, who will issue directives for both overt and covert political warfare to the propaganda organisation in the Middle East working under his guidance. S.O.E. propaganda from the Middle East will, therefore, conform to the directives received by them from Sir Walter Monckton. Any deviation from the settled policy which S.O.E. may desire to introduce for operational reasons must be referred to Sir Walter Monckton for the Minister of State, who will refer to P.W.E. London if in doubt .....

Finallyq co-ordination will be completed by the representation of Mr. Dalton on the P.W.E. Council of Ministers, and by the close liaison already established between S.O.E. and P.W.E. Regional Heads in London. The Controller of S.O.E., Middle East, and the Director of Special Propaganda sit on the Monckton Committee, which ensures co-ordination in Cairo'.

The last paragraph is sufficient to explain the fate of this promising approach: the Minutes were never accepted by the Foreign Office, and in effect the Foreign Office reply is given in Mr. Eden' s letter (1) of 12th February to Mr. Dalton 'I am bound to say that I was perturbed to find that S.0.E. in the Middle East are handling propaganda at all. It is surely the case that for S.O.E. to carry on any propaganda, either overt or subversive, is contrary to the division of functions laid down, whereby P.W.E. were entrusted with propaganda in enemy and enemy-occupied countries, and the Minister of Information with propaganda in neutral countries'. (A little distingenuous, this, in face of Mr. Dalton's repeated statements

(1) Original on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.

since August 1941 that S.O.E. must act as the Political Warfare Executive's agent overseas). The letter proceeds to attack S.O.E. for preparing without authority to broadcast to Kurds, Armenians and Georgians. (1) and concludes by an attack on Sir Walter Monckton's position as co-ordinator, as an attempt to extend the Minister of State's influence beyond that laid down in his Directive. The implication in fact is that there is a tendency for P.W.E., S.O.E. and the Minister of State's office in combination to oust the Foreign Office from control of British policy towards the Balkan States.

Lord Selborne found this letter on his table when he took over on 22nd February, charged in particular vrith the task of seeing that S.O.E. whole-heartedly backed the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government; and negotiations were thus to begin again in rather a new light. Meantime, on 6th and 7th February, S.O.E's 'Free Voice of Greece' station in Palestine had made its resounding attack on King George of Greece, which greatly discomfited the Foreign Office, (2) and greatly weakened S.O.E's position. Against this must be set the strong views of most of S.O.E's directing staff and in particular of those on the spot in the Middle East: 'S.O.E. covert broadcast now forms integral part of military plan for this Command and any impediment to its progress would, I feel sure, be strongly deprecated by

(1) A controveroy of very minor importance, explored further in Mr. Jebb's F/3243/68/4 of l6th March to Sir Orme Sargent, and related papersq in part in 5-O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4. Above p. 256 and 278.

(2) See above p. 233.

Cs-in-C.' (1) Lord Selborne's reply to Mr. Eden's letter (2) was couched in mild terms. but the D.S.P., Colonel Euan Butler, was summoned home from Cairo to back S.O.E's case, and Mr. Jebb on 20th March put S.O.E's arguments with considerable force to Sir Orme Sargent. (3) The Foreign Office on its side were pressing S.O.F. to abandon any projects for subversive activities in Turkey, (4) and was equally anxious about Gibraltar and about S.O.E's plans for Portuguese East Africa.

Opinion within S.O.E. was absolutely agreed on the 'unity of subversion': 'black' propaganda was an essential part of subversive operations. But there was some divergence as to the line to be pressed against other departments. Mr. Jebb's view, expressed in various papers, (6) was that an agreement could and should be negotiated with the Political Warfare Executive to give a formal blessing for the existing compromise and to establish a basis of real co-operation between the departments.. Colonel Taylor could see no logical haltingplace short of assumption by S.O.E. of responsibility for all 'black' propaganda from the United Kingdom as well as from the Middle East: the Ministry of Information could deal with 'overt'

(1) Mr. Marvell's telegram Alpha 202 to C.D. dated 5th March. Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.
(2) Dated 21st March 1942 - in Lord Selborne's papers.
(3) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part 1.
(4) Lord Selborne to Mr. Eden on 31st March, and further correspondence in Lord Selborne's papers.
(6) Minute to Lord Selborne dated 31st March, with draft 'Treaty'with P.W.E.: Minute to C.D. dated 12th April, copy to Lord Selborne on 13th April: Minute to Lord Selborne dated 18th April - all on S.O.R. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 Part 1.

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propaganda everywhere, S.O.E. with 'covert' - in fact, Mr. Dalton's solution of December 1941. (1) The matter was for the present settled by personal discussion between Lord Selborne and Mr. Bracken, in which the latter very frankly accepted the position in Middle East as it stood. (2)

There matters rested, as it seems, until the Foreign Office took the initiative in proposing a more radical solution. A proposal (3) was submitted by Sir Orme Sargent on 5th June for the full transfer of responsibility for covert propaganda in the Middle East from S.O.E. to the Political Warfare –Executive: this set out very convincingly the case for regarding the Middle East as a 'base area', parallel to the United Kingdom, in which the Political Warfare Executive should be entitled to set up its own specialist organisation. The paper was discussed with Sir Charles Hambro and it was also forwarded by Mr. Eden himself, with his full endorsement, on 22nd June. (4) Lord Selborne's reply was not despatched until 24th July, (5) but it represented the result of very full and careful discussion within S.O.E. The case for unity was well and fully argued, but unfortunately it proved too much - it proved that most of P.W.E's activities in the United Kingdom

(1) Minute of 1st April, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131 Part 1. Cf. above p. 569.

(2) Lunch discussion on 8th April, and letter from Lord Selborne to Mr. Bracken dated 21st April - draft on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 131.

(3) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/3.1) 68/4 Part 11.

(4) Original in Lord Selborne's papers.

(5) Copy in Lord Selborne's papers, and on S.O.E. Archives File 1/270/01: it refers to a letter of Mr.. Eden dated 27th June - this is almost certainly a mistake for 22nd June.

should propery be united with those of S.O.E. - and the ifficulty could hardly be concealed by claiming that S.O.E's stations in Palestine dealt with real resistance movements, while those of P.W.E. in England dealt with fictitious ones. Lord Selborne's policy was however to co-operate with the Foreign Office on all reasonable occasions - 'I am extremely anxious that S.O.E. in all its activities should possess your confidence and deserve it' - and the argument led up to compromise proposals. The essence of these was that the existing S.O.E stations should be maintained in Riddle East: but that a Director of Propaganda and Information should be appointed to ensure full conformity by S.O.E. to the policy of the Foreign Office and P.W.E. and that if the Director thought fit P.W.E. should be entitled to set up its own stations in the Middle East. Mr. Casey, the Minister of State, almost simultaneously submitted proposals (1) of a-very similar nature, in which he recognised the disadvantages of breaking. up the existing S.O.E. organisation but asked as matter of urgency for a successor to Sir Walter Monckton, f or a senior P.W.E. representative, and for a Press Adviser. This telegram was not available to S.O.E. until Mr. Eden wrote to Lord Selborne on 12th August (2) rejecting S.O.E's proposals for a compromise, and pressing for the continuation of the negotiations already in progress between S.O.E. and P.W.E. Lord Selborne’s advisers were now unanimously in favour of renewing the battle in concert with Mr. Casey: the Minister took his own line - the only line which gave promise of peace

(1) No. 1134 of 24th July 1942. Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4Part II.
(2) Original in Lord Selborne's papers.

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and insisted on the immidiate conclusion of the proposed agreement with P.W.E. (1)

From this point matters went ahead quickly in London: ‘Heads of an Agreement’ were already in existence, and a draft was cleared between Mr. Leeper and Sir Charles Hambro in letters exchanged on 20th and 21st August. (2) The Foreign Office still saw a loophole, which Sir Orme Sargent formally closed in his letter of 22nd August - a belated intervention accepted reluctantly by S.O.E. (3) The Agreement itself is printed as an Appendix, with the Foreign Office amendments. As will be seen, it explicitly concedes the handing over to the Political Warfare Executive of S.O.E's broadcasting Stations in Middle East, and it accepts P.W.E.’s rights to similar facilities elsewhere. The Political Warfare Executive on its side is to provide S.O.E. with 'special clandestine broadcasting facilities for operational purposes’, and arrangements are foreshadowed for keeping these in line with propaganda policy: and in addition ‘P.W.E. will not put, or permit their overseas missions to put, agents into the field' for any P.W.E. purpose - S.O.E. will act as the sole ‘travel a ency’ for P.W.E. in Occupied Europe.

Here at last was a working arrangement for mutual co-operation between two specialist services, each of which recognised the other's right to exist. It was no anwer to the fundamental problem of subversion, it was indeed a very timid compromise compared with the dramatic design of 1940: but P.W.E. and S.O.E. were henceforward in reality much closer

(1) D/CD(A)’s Minute of 14th August, and Lord Selborne’s, reply, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part II.
(2) Copies on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part II
(3) The final text of the Agreement is dated 3rd September 1942 - see Appendix J.

to one another than ever S.O.1 and S.O.2 had been, and the major issue did not arise again.

It must however be mentioned, by way of appendix, that the Agreement in its plain terms was not brought into force in the Middle East until March 1943.This represented a rearguard action conducted with skill and energy by Lord Glenconner in Cairo; but it raised no new issue of principle and need not be followed in detail here. (1) First, there was delay in getting Mr. Vellacott, P.W.E's representative, to Cairo. Then argument broke out in Cairo on the meaning of 'broadcasts for operational purposes': did it mean propaganda campaigns of a general kind or messages related to particular operations? When this was resolved, agreement was reached on 7th December between Lord Glenconner and Mr. Vellacott for a transfer of the broadcasting facilities to P.W.E., reserving S.O.E's right to maintain its own teams to broadcast to Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece, with the possibility of extension. NO sooner was this agreement reached and reported to London than it was in effect repudiated by Sir Orme Sargent, who insisted that the covert Yugoslav station 'Karageorge' should be closed down. This was a 'Mihailovitch' station, and it is clear that S.O.E. did not in fact supervise the Yugoslav broadcasting team as closely as was necessary. To make matters worse, the instructions sent by the Foreign Office through P.W.E. were simply ignored in the Middle Fast. (2)

(1) The main London papers are on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Parts 2 and 3: Lord Glenconner's Cairo papers are on two Middle East Propaganda Files - dated I)ecember 1940 to March 1943.

(2) On the incitement of Lord Glenconner who was then in London see his telegram 657 of 26th December 1942: Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 68/4 Part II. The S.O.E. papers imply that P.W.E. were in sympathy with this defiance.

It is not therefore surprising that on 10th February 1943 Mr. Eden wrote somewhat brusquely to Lord Selborne, repudiating absolutely S.O.E's claim that operational propaganda could include 'continuous propaganda in support of any body or movement in an enemy or enemy-occupied country merely because S.O.E. were in contact with such a body or movement': he would accent no solution but the complete control of all propaganda from Middle East by the Foreign Office through P.W.E. This was not altogether sensible: it was useless for the Foreign Office to grasp control of words, while accepting the right of the military to direct S.O.E. as regards arms, money and operations. But S.O.E. were in no position to negotiate further, and after an exchange of letters between hinisters it was left to the officials to negotiate a new and less ambiguous agreement, this time in London. It is clear from Sir Charles Hambro's messages to Lord Glenconner early in March that S.O.E. London were now satisfied with their working arrangements with P.W.E. in England, and were not prepared to fight further to maintain the Directorate of Special Propaganda in Cairo. The matter was however abruptly clinched by Sir Orme Sargent who took the matter to the Prime Minister on 16th March, on receipt of a telegram from Lord Moyne. (1) Some of Sir Orme's statements might be tendencious or even false, but there could be no further dispute on the main point at issue. The agreement was concluded on 20th March 1943, and made it plain beyond all doubt that the Jerusalem Station and all responsibility for broadcasting must be handed over, as well as all responsibility for the composition of leaflets. S.0.E.. retained only some technical personnel at the Station, and

(1) Mr. Churchill was acting as Foreign Secretary with Sir Orme Sargent as his senior official.

their own printing press. The Prime Minister himself as Foreign Secretary asked Lord Moyne to ensure that the agreement was promptly and completely carried out. This marked the last stage of S.O.E's career as a Ministry of Political and subversive Propaganda.

(e) The Secret Services

By a series of historical accidents the three main Services supported from secret funds were during the war under independent Ministers. The S.I.S. was the responsibility of the Foreign Secretary; the Security Service (or M.I.5) was from the summer of 1940 run by the Home Defence (Security) Executive, under the chairmanship first of Lord Swinton and later of Mr. Duff Cooper; S.O.E. belonged to the Minister of Economic Warfare. This was scarcely defensible on administrative grounds: it clearly involved a duplication of common services, a danger of confusion in the handling of agents in the field, and undue delay in the pooling of essential common information. Adminigtrative logic at first sight seems to point to the unity of the Secret Service. Political logic in a democracy points the other way,. the withdrawal of funds from the scrutiny of Parliament is in itself a danger to the public control of government. The disposal of secret funds is traditionally a source of political power: and it is clearly safest for the public that it should not be grasped by a single hand. It is therefore fortunate that the administrative arguments do not all tend in the same direction. The three Secret Services were similar in method but not in purposc; each was drawn toward different groups of open departmunts and used somewhat similar methods to promote different ends.

M.I.5 was concerned primarily with internal problems: the other two were largoly external. The collection of intelligence put the S.I.S. primarily at the disposal of the lntelligence divisions of the Service departments and to a lesser extent of the Foreign Office. The promotion of Subversion drew S.O.E. first towards Political Warfare in a broad sense, then towards the offensive operational side of the Services. From this divergence of purpose there developed considerable divergence of method, and the creation of a single Secret Service was never a projcct of practical importanoc during the war.

M.I.5 As regards M.I.5, there was very little conflict of interest: indeed there -was a strong community, as S.O.E. were profoundly interested in maintaining the security of their own organisation. (1) The problem therefore was in practice only one of scouring efficient liaison between M.I.5 and S.O.E., as between M.I.5 and other departments.At first S.O.E's security scction was controlled by Lt. Col. Calthrop, who acted also as liaison officer with S.I.S., and a Scotland Yard Officer was attached to his section in January 1941 for liaison with the police. But tho problem of security soon outgrew this organisation and in July 1941 the Section was reconstituted on a larger establishment, under major General G. Lakin At about the same time a meeting was held between the heads of the two organisations to discuss all points of friction out-standing: (2) but the practice of high-level meetings did not develop further. The principle adopted was that all

(1) 'his account is drawm largely from the S.O.E. History of the Security Section, and comments thereon by Cdr. Senter, R.N.V.R., head of the Section from September 1942.

)4,hT'4,-

(2) Meeting of 18th July 1941 Minutes on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1)SC/94.

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matters of Security, as regards agents and as regards S.O.E's own organisation, should be canalised through the Security Section, which worked on a footing of mutual confidence with M.I.5. This confidunce was well established in General Lakin's time and was maintained after his retirement to a less onerous post in September 1942, when he was replaced by Cdr. Sentor. The only formal machinery was the system of joint 'Panels' envisaged in July 1942: (1) there were to be four of these -

(a) To discuss problems of mutual interest arising out of S.O.E. training.

(b) To consider the security of S.O.E. operations.

(c) To consider the security of S.O.E. signals and. conmiunications.

(d) To arrange the exchange of information between M.I.5 and S.O.E. Country Sections.

Panel (b) was found to be unnecessary in practice, as M.I.5 shortly afterwards attached an officer to the Special Security Section of S.O.E., which had been set up in January 1943 to interrogate all returning agents with a view to checking the security of their organisations and to conduct any special investigations regarding enemy penetration,in the field. Panel (d) also turned out to be an arrangement more formal than was required: but Panels (a) and (c) continued to be very useful channels of collaboration.

Rolations with S.I.S. presented much more serious difficulties. D.Section had been formed within S.I.S. and had been removed from its control without its prior agreement and in face of a strong protest made by C.S.S. as soon as the

(1) Details in Security History of S.O.E. p. 4.

decision came to his knowledge. (1) There was undoubtedly serious danger that confusion would arise, from the existence of separate organisations working into enemy territory, and there were the best reasons for insisting on very close liaison. Arrangements for this were throughout satisfactory enough in form. Sir Frank Nelson appears to have visited the C.S.S. with Mr. Jebb at frequent intervals and to have informed him of S.O.E's plans and progress. Lt. Colonel Calthrop, who was wellknown and liked in both organisations, acted as a junior liaison officer, and from May 1941 (after the disappearance of the 'D Board') the A.C.S.S., was given a room in Baker Street and assumed personal responsibility for maintaining good relations; (2) he also occasionally attended meetings of the S.O.E. Council. (3) Direct relations were assumed to exist between Heads of Sections in S.O.E. and their opposite numbers in S.I.S.: in one case, that of France and Belgium, a joint Committee (4) was created in December 1941 in order to pool information and resources as far as possible.

In spite of all this machinery relations during 1941 and the early part of 1942 were a continual story of friction and recrimination. No intelligible issue of principle was involved, and each particular incident is an individual

(1) Abov, p. 106.

(2) C.D's circular minute of 4th May 1941. Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) '134 - Liaison with C'.

(3) Minute by Mr. Jebb to the Minister (March 1942 undated) Archives File (AD/S.1) F/134/1.

(4) This was the Wustmacott Committee: Sir Charles Hambro's letter to the A.C.S.S. on 1st December 1941, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/3.1) '134'.

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problem of Great intricacy: no useful purpose would be served now by attempting to scrutinise any of them in detail. The matter can be summed up as one of faults on both sides and psychological incompatibility. From S.I.S's point of view S.O.E. was an upstart organisation staffed by amateurs not one of whom understood the elements of secret work. It was invading S.I.S's territory with much sound and fury, and (as we have seen) it could not in its first two years expect to achieve anything proportionate to the disturbance which it caused: S.I.S's intelligence, (it would be claimed) scanty though it might be, represented a concrete gain for the Allied war effort, and there was no reason why it should. be endangered by bungling amateurs. For S.O.E. the same set of facts assumed quite a different aspect. They were admittedly amateurs, but they had been entrusted by the 'War Cabinet with a task of an entirely novel kind, which was of the greatest importance to the whole Allied strategy. S.I.S's assistance could be of the utmost value, but it must be given as between equals and not as a matter of patronage. S.O.E. complained that while they were called upon to reveal all their projects to S.I.S. they got very little by doing so except discouragement: and there was no reciprocal attempt by S.I.S. to put its cards on the table and invite the co-operation of S.O.E. In all practical fields wirelesss communications, sea transport, the recruitment of personnel - S.I.S. claimed absolute priority for intelligence: and its secretiveness could be as dangerous to S.O.E’s agents as S.O.E's inexperience was to S.I.S.

Like so much in the development of S.O.E., this issue came to a head in the early part of 1942. Even apart from the general tension of the period, the time was then ripe for a new settlement. S.O.E. had gained much hard experience which fully

justified it in claiming technical independence from S.I.S.: it was probably already the larger organisation - apparently by the spring of 1942 it was sending three or four agents to the field for every one sent by S.I.S.: and it was looking to a future in which it would be required to expand further and faster in order to support the Allied invasion of Europe.

Relations were at this stage formally governed by the agreement of 15th September 1940, (1) under which the C.S.S. retained a measure of control over communications and the recruitment of agents, as well as the right to know S.O.E's projects and to appeal against them if they conflicted with the requirements of intelligence. The only important modifications up to the end of 1941 were that S.O.E. obtained the right to handle its own 'main line' signals traffic to its missions overseas, and also to organise clandestine wireless communications to agents, except from the United Kingdom: the building up of an S.O.E. 'War Station' was begun in Egypt in December 1941 (2) for communications to the Balkans.

By the end of 1941 there was some agreement that the old arrangements were in many respects obsolete: but the only question of immediate practical importance was that of the organisation of clandestine wireless communications from England. Hitherto S.O.E's traffic to its agents had been handled by S.I.S., in S.I.S's ciphers. There was a certain moral grievance in that S.I.S. thus had knowledge of all S.O.E's traffic, whereas S.O.E. had no corresponding access to S.I.S's signals: but the practical issue was that the

(1) Referred to above P. 137.

(2) S.O.E. Signals History - Section on Middle East.
S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) SC/68/5 refers to early wireless arrangements in Middle East.

scale of S.O.E's traffic was already large; and that S.0,E. was necessarily laying plans for the very much greater expansion which would be needed if resistance in the West, In Poland and in Czechoslovakia, passed into open guerilla warfare.This involved a signals organisation on a completely different scale from anything which S.I.S. would ever contemplate for its own purposes, and the difference of scale was certain in due course to bring a difference in kind; S.O.E's communications would ultimately more closely resemble those of a military organisation than those of a Secret Service.(1)

There was some preliminary argument as to vhether the old document of September 1940 was an agreement between departments which they could revise at their pleasure, or an edict which must stand until modified from above. S.O.E. was clearly in the right here, in maintaining that the relation between the departments had never been laid down by higher authority; (2) and negotiations appear to have been opened just before Christmas 1941 by the presentation of a new draft by S.O.E. (3)This was discussed between C.D. and C.S.S.. on 2nd January 1942, (4) and elicited a counter-draft prepared by S.I.S. (5) This really only contains two points of substance which are not in the original agreement: first, a proposal for a joint fortnightly

(1) Cf. C.S.S's 'dismayed' minute to C.D. of 5th February 1942, inspired by a preview of S.O.E's plans - on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F.134/1.

(2) The only basis for the opposite view was that the agreement and S.O.E's charter from the Cabinet had both been printed as Annexes to Mir. Dalton's paper of October 1940.

(3) Referred to in C.D's minute to A.D. of 3rd January 1942 on File 1/470/14. (A.D. also wrote a brief for S.0. on Communications, after his interview with C.S.S.)- on S.O.E. Archives File 1/170/1,

(4) S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/14.

(5) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/134/1.

meeting of senior officers to discuss S.O.E's projects, second, a consolidation of all secret communications from England under the existing S.I.S. controller. Both points were profoundly unwe1come to S.O.E., but the comments of S.O.E's officers concentrate less on them than on the 'undertone of condescending patronage bordering on the impertinent', (1) which can certainly be felt in various minor turns of style.The decision taken was to let matters rest until a report was made on S.O.E's signals problem by, a technical officer shortly to be appointed; then to take matters before som,, higher court - possibly Sir Alexander Cadogan. (2)

At this point Lord Selborne took over, and he was from the first aware of the importance of the problem. Fortunately much of the sting went out of it when on 26th March the C.S.S. formally agreed to S.O.E's claim for its own communications system in the West: in doing so he stipulated that S.O.E. should not 'pirate' frequencies, but should operate 'an overt system under the constitutional control of the W/T Board' , which was responsible for the allocation of frequencies between competing claimants. (3) The concession was unexpected, but eminently reasonable: S.O.E's requirements were now such as to reduce the old clandestine system to nonsens, and there was little practical advantage in maintaining unified control of signals when it did not exist in other fields.

(1) Note by C.D. to C.E.0. dated, 18th January 1942,' on S.O.E.. Archives File (AD/S.l) F/134/1.

(2) Mr. Jebb's minute of 20th January, and Mr. Dalton's note of 24th January, on S.O.E. Archives File AD/S.1) F/134/1.

(3) Meeting of 20th March 1942; C.D's letter of 21st March, C.S.S's letter of 26th March, and C.D's of 27th March, which together constitute a formal agreement. Copies on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/134/1.

This was one controversial issue out or the way.The other major point was S.I.S.'s proposal for a joint board to control the operations of S.O.E., and of this no more was heard. In its place emerged a new suggestion, for periodical meetings of the heads of the two organisations presided over by a Conciliator. their object would not be to concert plans, but to smooth out such wrang1es as might arise between subordinate sections of the two Services.This was put forward to Mr. Eden by the Minister in a letter of 31st March, which refers to an earlier conversation with the Foreign Secretary and Sir Alexander Cadogan: as the Minister said, 'the friction develops from a series of small incidents ... These occur de die in diem, therefore the only way to deal with them is a regular weekly meeting such as I have suggestedl. (1)Lord Selborne recurred to this proposal in the Report which he submittel to the Prime Minister on 10th April, and again in a letter to him of 20th April, (2) and the upshot was the appointment as Conciliator of Mr Findlater Stewart. The terms of reference were agreed with Mr. Eden early in May and the 'Liaison Committee' was constituted 'to review such points of mutual interest to C. and S.O.E. as may be brought before it by C. or C.D., and to determine their solution.In the event of the Committee not being unanimous on any matter it shall be open either to C. or C.D. to raise the question with their respective Ministers'. (3)

(1) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) 7/134/1. With the letter were enclosed a Memo. by Mr. Jebb, and a note by Sir Frank Nelson on individual instances of friction.

(2) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/14. This letter is also the origin of the administrative enquiry by Mr. Hanbury Williams and Mr. Playfair.

(3) Signed by Mr. Eden and Lord Selborne on 4th May 1942. Sent to Sir Findlater Stewart by Lord Selborne on same day. (Copies in Lord Sollborne's papers).

SECRET

This was never a very promising experiment in the field of government, and it perished without even a trial. (1) Apparently C.S.S. protested at once against Mr. Eden's decision and the debate began again. This time the matter was taken through Sir Desmond Norton to the Chiefs of Staff, whom he met in May in order to discuss S.O.E./S.I.S. relations. (2) Apparently no final conclusion was recorded by the Chiefs of Staff: but the upshot was that the machinery was improved in two very practical respects. First, S.I.S. was instructed to maintain close liaison with the J.P.C. regarding operational requirements, on the same basis as S.O.E.: second, a fortnightly meeting was arranged between S.O.E. and the Fordeign Office, and the C.S.S. was invited to attend. These steps provided for proper co-operation on the level of policy, both civil and military. Clearly friction on the lower levels could not be eliminated until such co-operation existed: once it did, minor disputes would fall into their proper place, to be judged in, relation to a wider agreement. It cannot be said that this agreement was ever completely achieved or that S.O.E. and S.I.S. ever worked as a whole in perfect harmony. but major disturbances did not recur, and in many sections very close and helpful relations developed undisturbed.

Like so much else in the story, this reflects not only improvements in organisation but the general turn in the course of the war from the autumn of 1942: when all was moving prosperously towards a clearly seen objective, there was far less excuse for backbiting and inter-departmental

(1) Sir FPindlater Stewart to Lord Selbonrne 4th June 1942: Lord Selborne to Mr Findlater Stewart 9th June. Copies in Lord Selborne's papers.

(2) C.D. to Major Norton 31st May 1942 - copy in S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) P/134.

feud than in the early days of ill-organised rear-guard action, This in part explains whir the idea of the unity of the Secret Service never came seriously under discussion. It was brought up by Mr. Maxwell in January 1942 as a possible solution of certain difficulties in the Middle East: Mr. Jebb's reaction was the very practical one - 'There would be much to be said for such an arrangement in a sensible world, but it would mean removing any control of the S.I.S. from the Foreign Office, and it would therefore, I should have thought, be impossible to propose it at the present time'. (1) Sir Frank Welson in his paper on relations with S.I.S. seems to have recurred to the idea of unity - a larger unity embracing M.I.5 - as the administrative ideal: but the idea went no further in the negotiations of 1942. (2) It only appears once more in the course of the war in an ably argued paper by Mr. Duff-Cooper dated 23rd March 1943, (3) where the administrative argument is stated in relation to the problem of maintaining an efficient nucleus of the three Secret Services in time of peace. The Prime Minister would have none of it: 'Every Department which has waxed during the tar is now considering how it can quarter its officials on the public indefinitely when peace returns. The less we encourage these illusions, the better.' He would consider nothing but the creation of a regular monthly meeting between the heads of the three services and Major Norton. (4) This Committee met once

(1) Memorandum of 6th January 1942 and Mr. Jebb's note to the Minister of 2nd February 1942, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/134/1.

(2) Page 7 of Mr. Jebb's Minute of March 1942 (undated) to Lord Selborne, copy on S.O.E. Archives File (Al)/S.1) F/134/1 .

(3) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F/138/15.

(4) Prime Minister's Minute N.231/3 of 4th April 1943, copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) P/138/15.

and (as Mr. Churchill doubtless had foreseen) forthwith recommended its own dissolution, as no business could be found which was not already handled through other channels. The three Secret Services continued, not without success, in their several indenendpnt courses.

4. CO-OPERATION WITH THE U.S.A. AND THE U.S.S.R.

It remains to give some account of the organization for collaboration with the two major Allies, both of whom were, in very different ways, inclined to take energetic action on lines parallel to those of S.O.E. An attempt to describe their organisation (or lack of organisation) and objectives would lead very far afield, and could not be satisfactorily documented from S.O.E's papers: so that this account must be limited fairly strictly to S.O.E's side of the story.

(a) U.S.A.

First Contacts Reference has already been made (1) to Sir William Stephenson'smission, which opened a channel of communication with Mr. G. Edgar Hoover's F.B.I. toward the end of 1940. Colonel Donovan comes into the picture as a roving Presidential agent at about the same time. He paid a visit of investigation and encouragement to the Balkan countries early in 1941: in February he saw Sir Frank Nelson in London (2) and was given a 'conducted tour' of selected S.O.E. stations. The Minister himself had seen Mr. Hopkins in London in January but had limited his discussions to the official

(1) Above P. 500

(2) No record of meeting, but it was authorised by the Minister on 12th February. (Papers on S.O.E. Archives File SC/76 (AD/S.1)).

business of the Ministry of Economic Warfare. (1) His first Official approach to the U.S. Government on S.O.E. affairs appears to have been a discussion on 9th May with Mr. Averell Harriman, then in London as a special representative for matters relating to Lease/Lend - the Defence Aid Act was passed in March 1941. (2) This was on delicate ground as regards revelation of Sir William Stephenson's status and activities in the U.S.A., but it led to a fairly frank discussion of the nature of S.0.E's work and the ways in which the U.S.A. could assist it. Mr. Harriman undertook to approach the President through Mr. Hopkins as to the possibility of a meeting of representntives to discuss collaboration in detail.

Donovan and the U.S.S.

The next stage was the emergence of Colonel Donovan as Co-ordinator of Strategic Information: a post created on 18th June, 1941, with a vast and indefinite charter, reporting direct to the President. (3) From this grew in June 1942 the Office of Strategic Services, which had a complex and troubled history, full of quarrels with competing departments the F.B.I., the Office War Information, the Co-ordinator of Latin-American Affairs, and the two fighting services. If these could be traced in detail they would afford interesting parallels to the development of S.O.E., and would probably also show in a relatively favourable light the various make-shift arrangements by which S.O.E. was fitted into the general British system of war government. The ultimate upshot (after

(1) Record of luncheon discussion in S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) SC/76 - (date 22nd January)
(2) Record of dinner Meeting on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1)3C/76.

(3) Account of the circumstances by Mr. David Eccles, dated 24th June, on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) SC/76,

various permutations) was that O.S.S. became an ‘all-embracing’ agency for 'black' work, whether Secret Intelligence, Special Operations or unacknowledgeable propaganda: it embraced the work of S.I.S. and S.O.E and in part that of P.W.E. But it had only a limited jurisdiction as regards nropaganda, even of a subversive kind, and its sphere was geographically limited. It was excluded by its charter from the Western hemisphere, and by the hostility of the local commanders from the Pacific Theatre. It was thus very far from having a free hand to run subversive warfare as a whole, and in its dealings with S.O.E. it had always to be 'looking over its shoulder' at possible repercussions on its position in Washington.

Official contact between the organisations began with a visit by Colonel Davies to the U.S.A. in September 1941, for discussions with Colonel Donovan, in which Sir William Stephenson took part. The essential points were, on the one hand, British aid to the U.S.A., by a sharing of experience and in particular by opening a school in Canada where organisers and agents could be trained on U.S. as well as on British account: on the other hand U.S. aid to Britain, in men, in materials and in the provision of channels and contacts in those countries to which the Americans had access more freely than the British. There seems to be no record of an agreement on paper at this stage - a rather delicate stage in the development of the U.S. attitude towards the war - but friendly relations were established and there was henceforward a reasonably free exchange of information and facilities. As can he imagined, most of the assets were at first on the British side: Colonel Donovan came into the field at an even later date than S.O.E.,

and his initial problems of organisation were enormous - in most occupied countries O.S.S. was to the last lependent, on channels opened up in the first instance by S.O.S. It was only in French North Africa and the territories related to it that there existed some American organisation - that of Mr. Murphy - on which to build, and it was in this region that O.S.S's first active local officers were established after America's entry into the war. (1) Colonel Donavan himself was in London in November 1941, and was given a very full picture of S.O.E's methods. He left a representative in London and an O.S.S. representative (Mr. Mauran) was also established in Cairo early in 1942.

First Agreement in Middle East: Spring 1942.

The first need for formal agreement arose out of this O.S.S. mission to Middle East, which had big ideas, and was not at all inclined to submit to British control. From February 1942 onwards Mr. Mauran was demanding the development of an independent American field organization: and the British were pointing out the intolerable political conse quenoes of such a step. (2) A temporary solution was embodied in a letter from Colonel Donovan to the newly appointed Minister of State, Mr. Casey, dated 5th April: (3) British and U.S. Secret intelligence organisations would operate independently, their Special Operations would be closely linked and would be directed by the country which had military command in the theatre. The British would thus have the controlling interest in the Middle East and Balkans,

(1) Capt. Eddy at Tangier, Col. Solberg at Lisbon, Mr. Raichle at Gibraltar - all in December 1941 or early 1942.

(2) Cf. papers of the S.O.E. Sub-Committee of the M.E.D.C. t in February 1942 and exchange of telegrams with S.O.E. London. S.O.E. Archives File 60/470/12.

(3) Copy on S.O.E. Archives File 60/470/12.

and there would be some chance of pursuing a coherent policy.

The 'O.S.S. Treaty's September 1942.

As was so apt to happen in dealing with the U.S.A., this high level agreement had very little effect on what American officials did in practice: and by May1942 it was obvious that the danger of unco-ordinated action was still there (1) - there were suggestions for instance of the direct allocation of aircraft by the Americans to the Yujoslavs in order to assist Mihailovitch, and of similar direct aid to the Poles, which would have been administratively quite unworkable. In addition, provisional arrangements had been made for joint operations in North Africa and Iberia, (2) and there would require higher confirmation. It was thus appropriate that the whole field should be covered by discussions between Sir Charles Hambro, Colonel Donovan, and their staffs, which took place in London, in June 1942.

The agreement which issued from these discussions was finally confirmed in September, under the authority of the Chiefs of Staff and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. (3) The dooument involved are very detailed and bore too little relation to later practice to be worth quoting in full. But the principles involved were simple enough in themselves, and

(1) See long minute by Lord Glenconner dated 28th May, On S.O.E. Archives File 60/470/12.
(2) Copy of agreement dated 5th May 1942 in S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/12 (subject to confirmation by Col. Donovan and the British C.O.S.)
(3) Copy of exchange of letters and summary of agreement on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F.76/9. Full note of discussions - S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/12. C.O.S. approval given by letter from Brig. Hollis to C.D. dated 3rd September on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/12. the Joint Planners had earlier pressed for a closer integration that was provided for in the agreement - J.P.(42)632 and 707.

proved to be fairly stable (though very complicated) in application-

(a) Close collaboration between the two Head Offices, through liaison officers in London and Washington.

(b) The division of the world into British and American areas, in which ultimate control would rest with the British and American authorities respectively.

(c) In the Balkans and Middle East a rather loose arrangement by which the head of the O.S.S. mission would accept ‘direotion and instructions' from the S.O.E. Controller, but would have the right of direct appeal to Washington in the event of disagreement.

(d) In the rest of Europe a distinction between
(i) 'Invasion Countries' (at this stage Norway, Belgium, Holland and France) in which there should be only one integrated Field Force controlled jointly by S.O.E. and the London Office of O.S.S.
and
(ii) ‘Non-Invasion Countries', in which there was no objection to an Indensndent O.S.S. Field Force, provided that it was conrolled by O.S.S. London in close liaison vdth S.O.E.

Later experience.

In general this worked well in Western Europe and North Africa, poorly in the Balkans, very unevenly in India, China and the Far East.In Western Europe O.S.S's ambitions were relatively limited. (1) In France and the Low Countries it was anxious only to contribute 'teams' to assist in the final rising, and it did not interfere seriously with the Preliminary

(1) The original agreement was amplified and made more precise on those points in a document signed in January 1943 - copy on S.O.E. Archives File 1/470/12.

'build-up' of resistance: when D-day approached integration under the control of SHAEF became complete. In Norway O.S.S. wished to be more fully associated with the work from the start: but luckily a joint Anglo-Norwegian control already existed and O.S.S. fitted very well into the eyisting framework, with joint responsibility for all operations, and a particular responsibility for the area North of Namsos. In the other Countries - Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia in particular - the activities of both organisations were so tenuous that there was no serious chance of friction.

In the Balkans there were continual difficulties, beginning with a proposal in August 1942 for an O.S.S. mission on a grand scale under a certain Colonel Hoskins, whose powers appeared to be likely to approximate to those of a Minister of State. This was repressed with some difficulty, but left a legacy of friction. A joint controlling Committee with Lord Glenconner as chairman and arbiter was set up in February 1943: in June the Commanders-in-Chief expressed uneasiness about the weakness of S.O.E's control and prorosed a new arrangement for a Committee under the C.G.S., reporting to the Commanders-in-Chief. (1) This was in the eyes of S.O.E. a serious breach in the position of the organisation as one exercising world-wide control of subversion from Headquarters in London. Lord Selborne protested to Mr. Casey (2) and was mollified by an assurance that real control would still rest with S.O.E.: but the decision was in effect a stage in the development (to be referred to later) by which

(1) Telegram giving the Cs-in-C's conclusions No.1527 of 24th June 1943, copy on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F.76/9; of. C.C.S. conclusions of 3rd July reported in JSM1027 on same file.

(2) Letter of 29th June 1943 on S.O.E. Archives File (AD/S.1) F.76/9.

Special Operations in the Balkans became more and more a matter of military policy for which S.O.E. London bore comparatively little responsibility. This did not in itself reduce friction: it was for obvious reasons the policy both of the Foreign Office and of the Commanders-in-Chief that American attempts to develop independent field organisations in the Balkansshould be tactfully resisted, and the burden of resistance fell on S.O.E.'s was only in 1944 that the American and British organisations working into the Balkans grew into the habit of easy collaboration which generally prevailed in Western Europe.

Conclusion.

So bare an account as this does less than justice to the lively nature of the collaboration. There was political friction fairly frequently, personal incompatibility less fre cluently but there was real freedom in the exchange of operational information, of however secret a character, and there were many fields in which O.S.S. and S.O.E. worked as one single organisation.From 1942 onwards each occupied a very large part in the other's thoughts and plans. O.S.S. could hardly move without British organisation and British knowledge, cramping though it sometimes found them: S.O.E. drew largely on American stores, above all on American aircraft, and American brains and energy contributed much to the liveliness of an organisation which might easily have become narrow and overtired as the war went on. One can believe little of what is published or hinted in America about the American creation of resistance in Europe: but there was nevertheless an American contribution of the very highest importance.